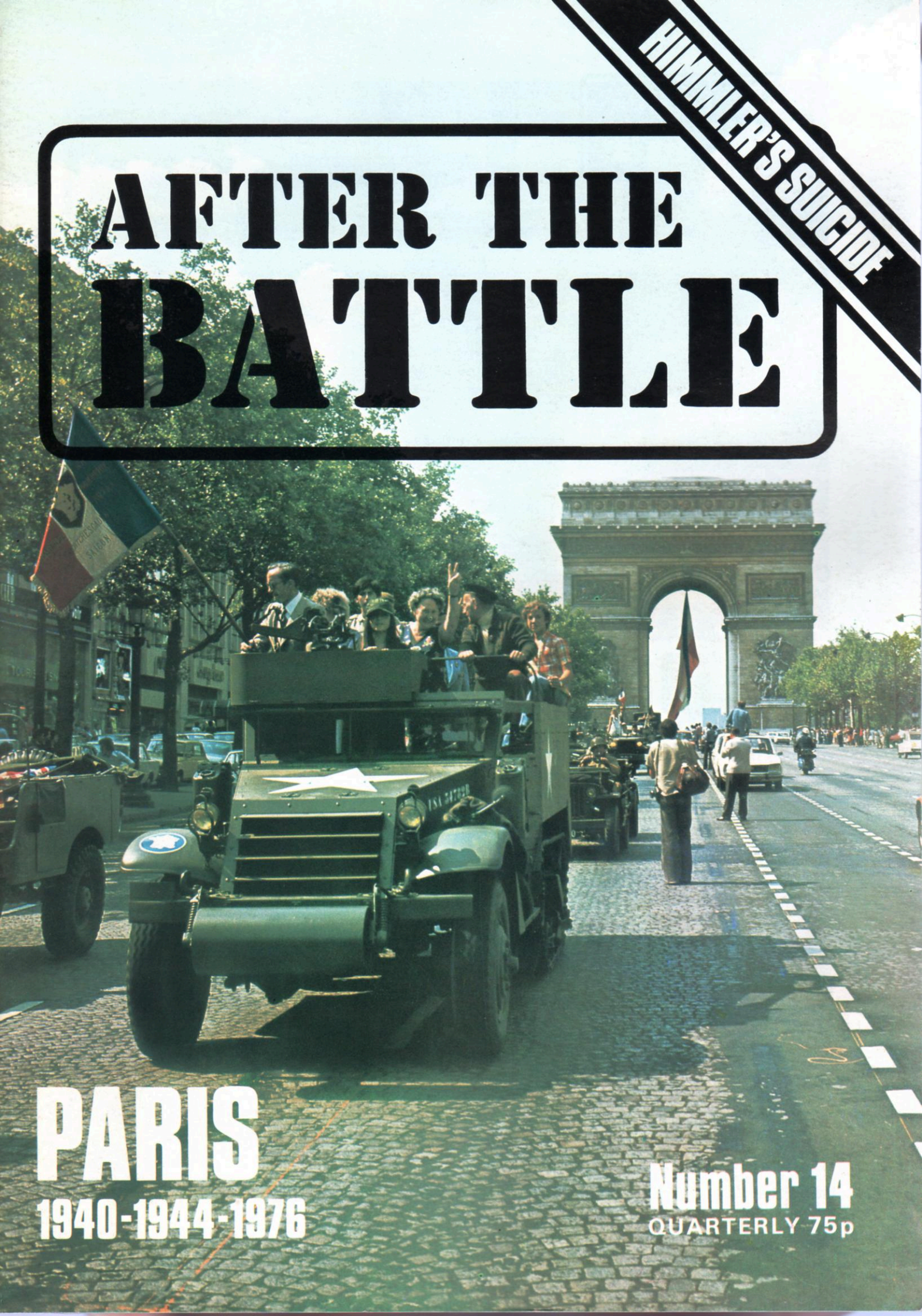
AFTER THE BATTLE

HIMMLER'S SUICIDE



PARIS
1940-1944-1976

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Front Cover: The 'Liberation of Paris' August 25, 1976. A French-owned White M3 half-track parades down the Avenue des Champs Elysees, thirty-two years after the first victory march.

Centre Pages: Amphibian DUKWs, participating in 'Major' Peter Gray's Military Vehicle Conservation Tour, on their historic voyage along the river Seine in Paris, August 25, 1976.

Back Cover: Comparison in colour (see page 53). Gordon Ramsey beside the same grave in August 1976. The quotation is from the 2nd Division Memorial at Kohima, India and is a free translation from the Greek of Simon Ides and represents the message from Leonidas to the Spartans at Thermopylae. Its use on the memorial was originally suggested by J. Maxwell Edmunds. In 1962, the inscription on the memorial was corrected from 'their' tomorrow to 'your' tomorrow.

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'War Graves' is based on *The unending vigil* by Philip Longworth, published by Constable.

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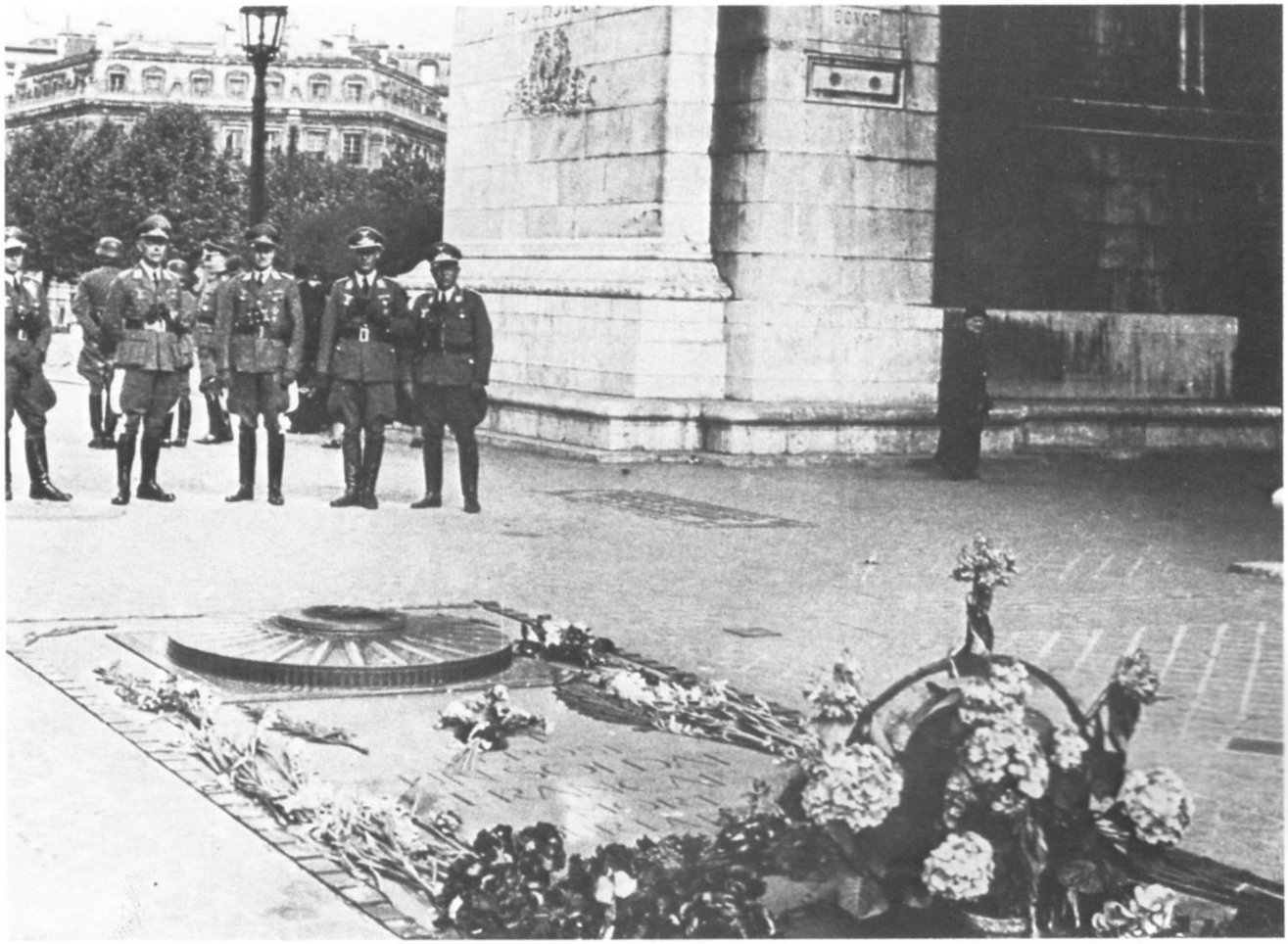
Above: A daily reminder to Parisians of the occupation was the midday 'Wache am Triumph' along the Champs Elysees. Picture taken November 9, 1940 (Bundesarchiv). Below: Traffic islands would make the same march rather painful today!

Opposite top: A group of German officers at the tomb of the French Unknown Soldier (Bundesarchiv). Bottom: The grave heaped with wreaths in August 1976.



PARIS, 1940

At 4.00 a.m. on Friday, May 10, 1940, the German invasion of Holland, Belgium and Luxembourg began. Within five days, German forces had crossed the French frontier and were racing across northern France. Exactly four weeks later, German spearheads were approaching Paris and the French Government began to evacuate the city.

Unlike the successful defence against the German advance in 1914, this time there was no Paris 'taxicab' army to be rushed to the front and no heroic stand on the River Marne. Instead, it was decided that the capital would be given to the Germans on a plate; to be surrendered as an 'open city'. It would fall to the recently appointed Military Governor of Paris, General Dentz, to hand over the city to the Germans.

The Surrender

On the evening of June 13, a German wireless message had been received by the Police Prefecture ordering the despatch of French envoys to receive surrender terms. By 5.00 a.m. the following morning, German and French officers had met at Sarcelles, on the outskirts of Paris, and the occupation of the city was arranged.

Half-an-hour later, the first German motorised columns entered the city through the Porte de la Villette in the north-east. By 6.30 a.m. military vehicles had reached the centre of Paris and a German command post had been established in the Hotel Crillon, an office building facing the Place de la Concorde.

The people of Paris (only a bare 700,000 since more than two million had already fled the city), awoke to the blare of German loudspeaker cars announcing that a curfew would start at 8.00 p.m. that evening. German tanks took up strategic positions at bridges and important road junctions and military police, stationed on street corners, directed units to their quarters, already allocated long before the city was entered. Contrary to what Parisians expected, the German soldiers were quiet, polite and even friendly.

Meanwhile at the Place de l'Etoile, the conquerors prepared for their ceremonial entry. A huge swastika flag was hung below the Arc de Triomphe and a military band formed up. The honour of the march was given to soldiers of General von Koch-Erpach's 8. Division, who had fought their way to Paris through Belgium and France, as part of General Gunther von Kluge's Fourth Army. Promptly at 9.45 a.m. they moved off, using the same route taken by the French in their victory parade of 1918.

The Armistice

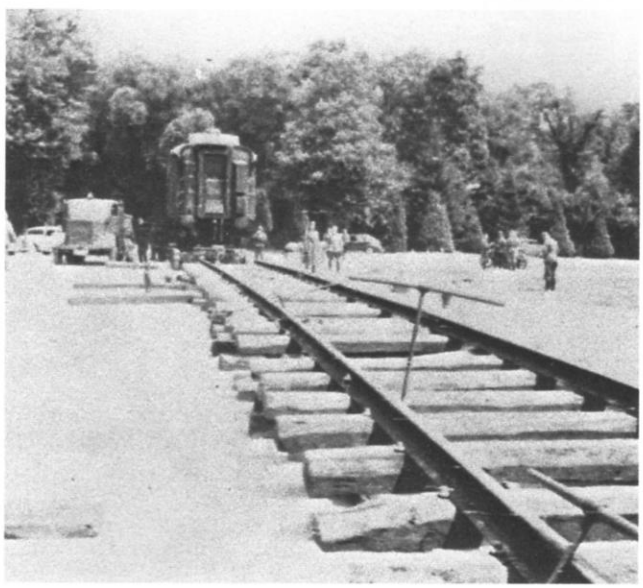
When Marechal Petain succeeded Paul Reynaud as the head of the French Government on June 16, his first task as Prime Minister was to seek an armistice. The next day he made a broadcast to this effect to the French people. When a favourable reply was received from the Germans to the French peace overtures, the French General Huntziger was chosen to lead the delegation. The plenipotentiaries were to pass through the German lines on the Loire bridge, near Tours, when firing would be suspended whilst the ten-car convoy, flying white flags, passed by.

Delayed by the streams of refugees blocking the roads, the French delegation arrived late at the rendezvous. Under German escort they were hurried northwards to Paris where they arrived at 7.00 a.m. on June 21. They were driven almost immediately to the Forest of Compeigne, north of the city, where Hitler had planned their reception. The American news correspondent William Shirer was there and described the scene:

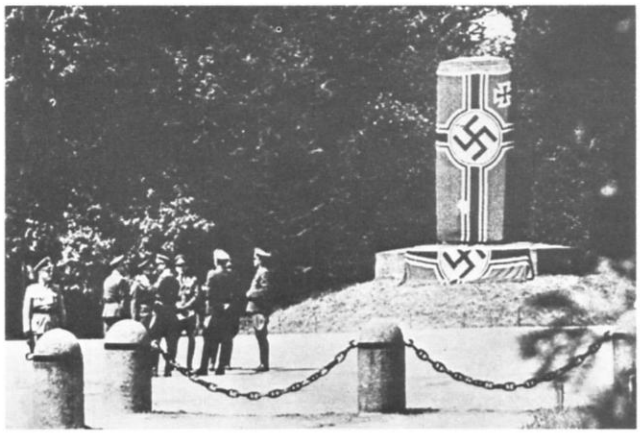
'Late on the afternoon of June 19, I had driven out there and found German Army engineers demolishing the wall of the museum where the old wagon-lit of Marechal Foch, in which the 1918 armistice was signed, had been preserved. By the time I left, the engineers, working with pneumatic drills, had torn the wall down and were pulling the car out to the tracks in the centre of the clearing on the exact spot, they said, where it had stood at 5 a.m. on November 11, 1918, when at the dictation of Foch the German emissaries put their signatures to the armistice.

'And so it was that on the afternoon of June 21 I stood by the edge of the forest at Compeigne to observe the latest and greatest of Hitler's triumphs, of which, in the course of my work, I had seen so many over the last turbulent years. It was one of the loveliest summer days I ever remember in France. A warm June sun beat down on the stately trees—elms, oaks, cypresses and pines—casting pleasant shadows on the wooded avenues leading to the little circular clearing. At 3.15 p.m. precisely, Hitler arrived in his big Mercedes, accompanied by Goering, Brauchitsch, Keitel, Raeder, Ribbentrop and Hess, all in their various uniforms, and Goering, the lone Field-Marshal of the Reich, fiddling with his field-marshal's baton. They alighted from their automobiles some two hundred yards away, in front of the Alsace-

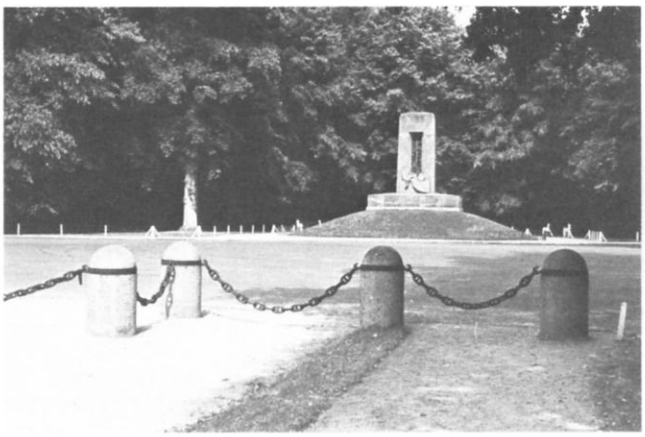
Above: German soldiers prepare to remove the railway coach from its home (Bundesarchiv). Below: The monument to the American benefactor of the building, Arthur H. Fleming, erected in 1927 . . . destroyed in 1940 . . . and re-erected in 1950.



When the 'Carrefour de l'Armistice was laid out in 1927, the ground level was raised to that of the line. A new track had to be laid from the shed by the Germans in order to roll the coach to the centre of the clearing (Bundesarchiv).



German officers await the arrival of Hitler at the beginning of the avenue to the clearing. The Alsace-Lorraine memorial has been covered with German War Flags (IWM).



The monument, which was dismantled after the ceremony and taken to Germany, was discovered after the war in packing cases and re-erected.

Lorraine statue, which was draped with German war flags so that the Fuehrer could not see the large sword, the sword of the victorious Allies of 1918, sticking through a limp eagle representing the German Empire of the Hohenzollerns. Hitler glanced at the monument and strode on.

'His face was grave, solemn, yet brimming with revenge. There was also in it, as in his springy step, a note of the triumphant conqueror, the defier of the world. There was something else . . . a sort of scornful, inner joy at being present at this great reversal of fate—a reversal he himself had wrought.

'When he reached the little opening in the forest and his personal standard had been run up in the centre of it, his attention was attracted by a great granite block which stood some three feet above the ground.

'Hitler, followed by the others, walked slowly over to it, stopped and read the inscription engraved (in French) in great high letters:

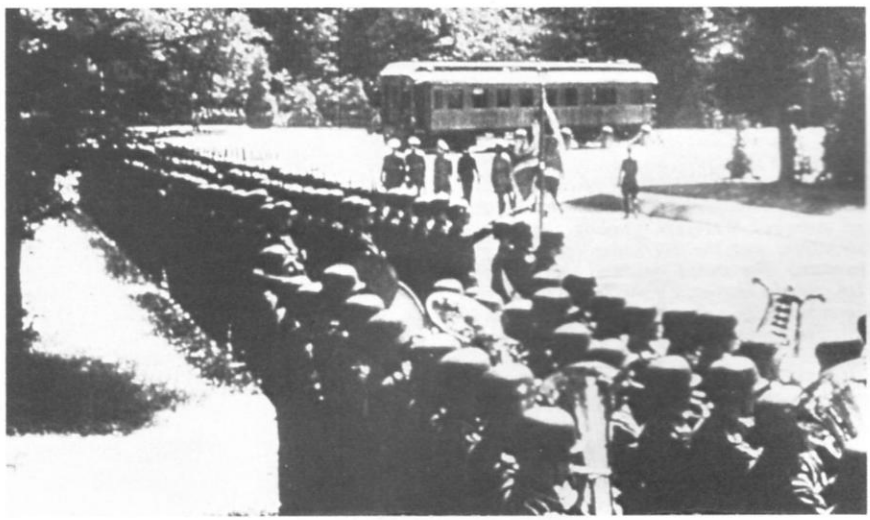
'HERE ON THE ELEVENTH OF NOVEMBER 1918 SUCCUMBED THE CRIMINAL PRIDE OF THE GERMAN EMPIRE—VANQUISHED BY THE FREE PEOPLES WHICH IT TRIED TO ENSLAVE.'

'Hitler read it and Goering read it. They all read it, standing there in the June sun and the silence. I looked for the expression in Hitler's face. I was but fifty yards from him and saw him through my glasses as though he was directly in front of me. I had seen that face many times at the great moments of his life, but that day it was afire with scorn, anger, hate, revenge, triumph.

He stepped off the monument and contrived to make even this gesture a masterpiece of contempt. He glanced back at it, contemptuous, angry—angry, one felt, because he could not wipe out the awful, provoking lettering with one sweep of his high Prussian boot. He glanced slowly around the clearing, and then, as his eyes met ours, one grasped the depth of his hatred. But there was triumph there too—revengeful, triumphant hate. Suddenly, as though his face was not giving quite complete expression to his feelings, he threw his whole body into harmony with his mood. He swiftly snapped his hands on his hips, arched his shoulders, planted his feet wide apart. It was a magnificent gesture of defiance, of burning contempt for the place and all that it had stood for in the twenty-two years since it witnessed the humbling of the German Empire.

'Hitler and his party then entered the armistice railway car, the Fuehrer seating himself in the chair occupied by Foch in 1918. Five minutes later the French delegation arrived, headed by General Charles Huntziger, commander of the Second Army at Sedan, and made up of an admiral, an Air Force general and one civilian, Leon Noel, the former ambassador to Poland, who was now witnessing his second debacle wrought by German arms. They looked shattered, but retained a tragic dignity. They had not been told that they would be led to this proud French shrine to undergo such a humiliation, and the shock was no doubt just what Hitler had calculated.

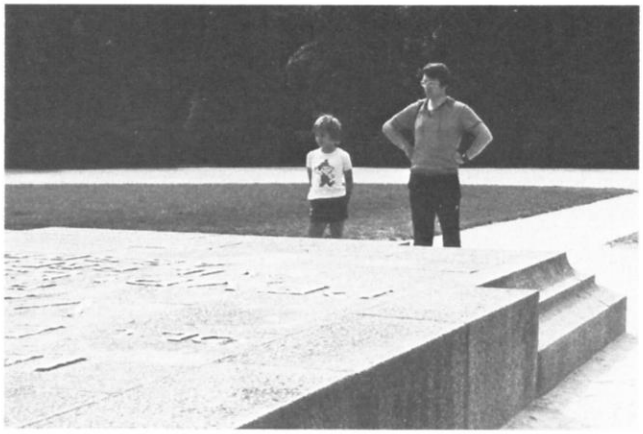
'Hitler and his entourage left the wagon-lit as soon as General Keitel had read the preamble of the armistice terms to the French.'



Above: Hitler and his entourage walk past the troops lining the avenue to the clearing. The coach is positioned exactly where it stood in 1918 (IWM). Below: Now that the memorials have been replaced and repaired, the clearing shows no change since 1940.

General Huntziger attempted to stall the demand for complete acceptance of the German terms and the French delegation continued to argue throughout the following day. Finally at 6.30 p.m., General Keitel issued an ultimatum: that the French must accept or reject the terms within an hour. The French Government capitulated and, at 6.30 p.m. on June 22, 1940, the German and French Generals signed on behalf of their respective countries.

Hitler reads the French wording on the great memorial which was designed by Marcel Mages and erected in 1922 (Bundesarchiv).



The stonework was repaired and replaced in its original position and unveiled on November 11, 1949.

The Carrefour de l'Armistice at Compeigne was the marshy clearing where two railway coaches were drawn up in November 1918 to negotiate the Armistice which ended the First World War. The two railway spurs, from nearby Rethondes, were originally laid down for heavy artillery firing on Noyon. The two trains, one for the German representatives and one for the Allies, were stopped there for the first time on November 8 when Marechal Foch and General Weygand for the French and Admiral Wemyess, leading the British delegation, put the surrender terms to the Germans. The trains returned there on the 11th and the Germans signed the Armistice in Marechal Foch's coach, No. 2419D, at 5.10 a.m. The cease fire was then sounded at 11.00 a.m.

It was only natural that the historic site would be established as a French memorial. The area was laid out in a circular fashion and the exact positions where the two railway coaches had stood was marked with granite slabs between the railway tracks. The railway coach which had been put on exhibit at the Invalides in Paris was returned to Compeigne in 1927 and housed in a special shed.

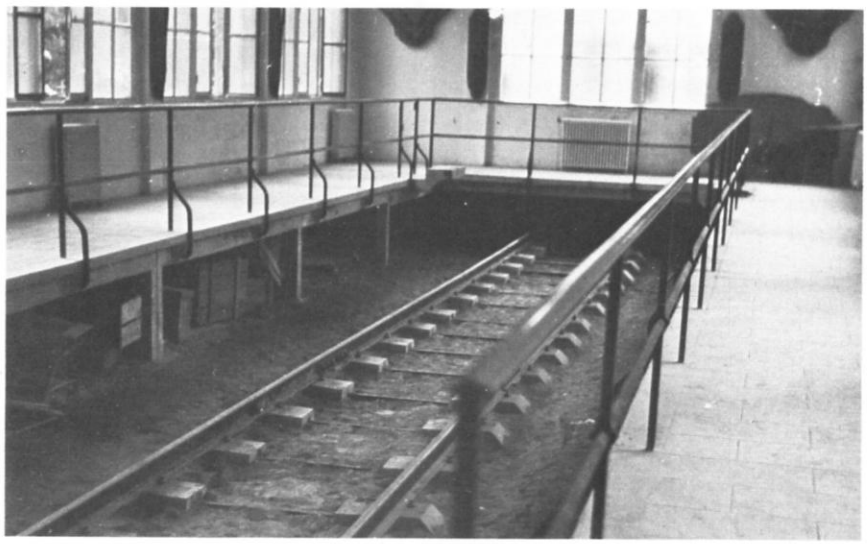
The opening ceremony was performed on November 11, 1932 by Millerand and Poincare and, in 1937, the statue of Foch was unveiled.

Looking back, thirty-six years later, one can smile at Hitler's effrontery when he decided to reverse the roles in 1940. When the glade had been laid out, the ground level had been raised and the railway tracks cemented flush with the surface. German Army engineers, therefore, had to lay another line on top of the original one in order to roll the coach out of the shed to the exact spot it had occupied in 1918.

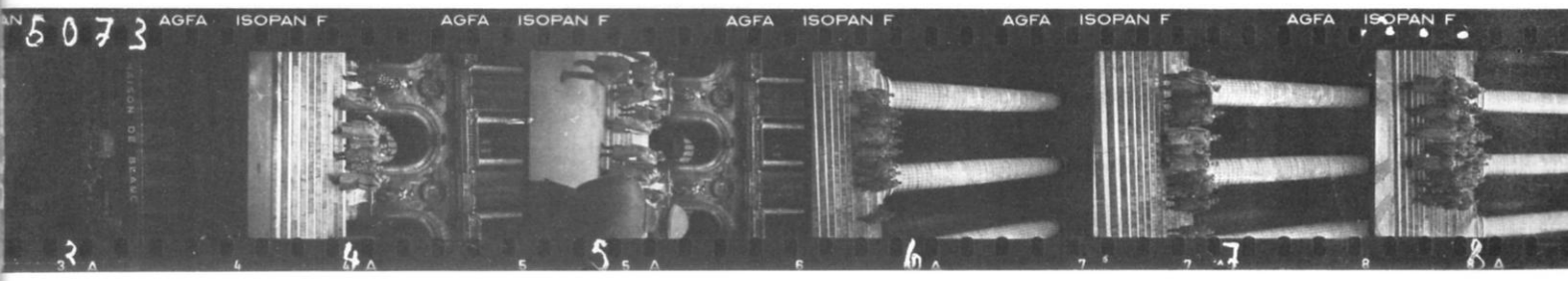
After the ceremony the coach was transported to Berlin by road to be displayed in the Lustgarten, being destroyed in an RAF air raid in 1943. One can understand that the Germans took offence at the emotional French wording on the large central memorial, which stood between the two railway tracks, and this was blown up, as was the railway shed. The Alsace-Lorraine statue, which stands on the left of the entrance drive to the area (which had been covered up at the 1940 ceremony by the German War Flags) was dismantled and taken to Germany in packing cases and the whole area defaced.

At the end of WWII the site was reinstated by the French. The large stone memorial was repaired and the Alsace-Lorraine memorial, which had been found in Germany after the war, repaired and replaced in its original position. The railway shed was rebuilt and, with the destruction of Marechal Foch's wagon-lit, the authorities rolled in a duplicate, adding the old number and quietly omitting to point out that this was not the original coach! A certain lady at the Imperial War Museum, London, suspecting the subterfuge, checked the numbers underneath the coach and, on raising the matter with the French authorities, was no doubt confronted with several red faces!

Above: Marechal Foch's coach arrives in Berlin by road. It is seen here passing along the Unter den Linden to the Lustgarten where it was destroyed by the RAF in 1943 (IWM). Below: The shed at Compeigne—Wot no coach!



Today, the trees around the glade have matured and the railway line is severed where it reaches the forest at one end and is blocked by a monument to Arthur H. Fleming at the other where it enters the shed. Although no reference is made to the events of 1940, one suspects that the odd German tourists we saw when we visited the site in August 1976, have to suppress a wry smile to themselves today.



Hitler in Paris

Hitler had received the news of the French capitulation whilst at Fuehrerhauptquartier Wolfsschlucht at Bruly-de-Pesche, a small village in the Gonrieux Forest in southern Belgium. He had travelled to Compeigne on June 21 but then returned to Bruly, leaving the negotiations in the hands of General Keitel, his OKW chief.

Although the armistice subsequently signed was not to come into force until 1.35 a.m. on the 25th, Hitler had already planned to return to Paris on his own private tour. He had decided not to order a massive parade in Paris: 'I am not in the mood for a victory parade. We aren't at the end yet,' he said.

His first and only visit to the French capital was to be an art tour of the city which had fascinated him since his early years. From his endless studies of maps and plans of Paris, he thought he would be able to find his way about the important streets and monuments as if he lived there. In addition to his military entourage, he was to be accompanied by three of his 'artist' friends: architects Albert Speer and Hermann Giesler, and sculptor Arno Breker who, being very familiar with the architectural history of Paris, had prepared a route to take in all the important buildings. Hitler's photographer, Heinrich Hoffmann, would be with them with his camera, whilst a military cameraman would take a cine-film. Uniforms were provided for the artists so that they befitted the occasion.

At 3.30 a.m. on June 23, the party was flown by Hitler's personal pilot Hans Baur from the nearby airfield of Gros Caillou to Le Bourget aerodrome, north-east of Paris. Arriving at 5.30 a.m., the group transferred into the waiting cars. Hitler sat next to the driver in the leading Mercedes with his guides Breker and Speer on the jump seats behind. Giesler and the adjutants sat in the rear seats.

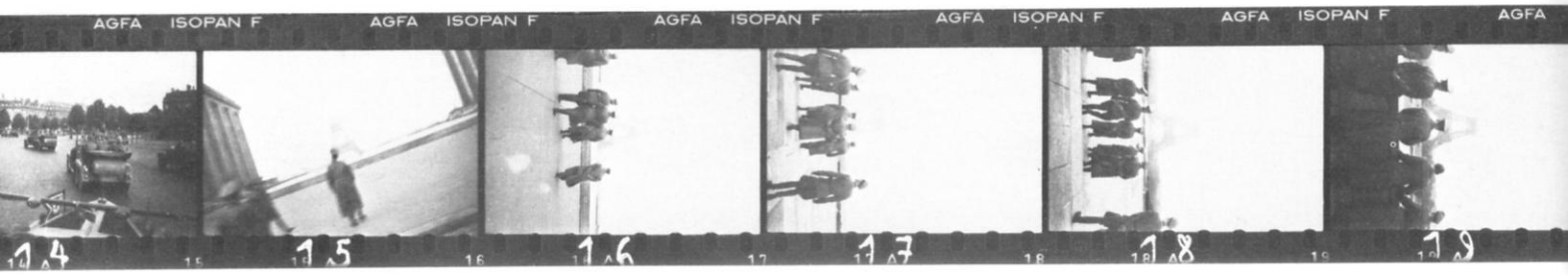
The ten-car convoy moved off, driving six kilometres down the N2 to enter the city at Porte de la Villette. As the first thing Hitler wanted to see was the Opera House, the route ran via the Rue de Flandre and Rue La Fayette. Here, the cine-cameraman was in action for the first time, filming Hitler's car behind the Opera in Rue Gluck. Colonel Speidel, the German Military Governor of Paris, was waiting at the Opera House to greet the party. Here Hoffmann rather under-exposed his first frame (3). Albert Speer has recorded his description of their first stop:

'The great stairway, famous for its spaciousness, notorious for its excessive ornamentation, the resplendent foyer, the

Frame 4. Hitler leaves the Opera House flanked by his guides, Arno Breker, Albert Speer and Hermann Giesler.

When we arrived at 6.00 a.m., the Opera was shut, even though we had our fifty-mark note ready for the caretaker!

Hitler's car behind the Opera in Rue Gluck—a still from the cine-film (IWM).



Another cine-frame of the convoy proceeding south on Rue Royale after visiting the Madeline (IWM).

elegant, gilded parterre were carefully inspected. All the lights glowed as they would on a gala night. Hitler had undertaken to lead the party. A white-haired attendant accompanied our small group through the deserted building. Hitler had actually studied the plans of the Paris opera house with great care. Near the proscenium box he found a salon missing, remarked on it, and turned out to be right. The attendant said that this room had been eliminated in the course of renovations many years ago. "There, you see how well I know my way about" Hitler commented complacently. He seemed fascinated by the Opera, went into ecstasies about its beauty, his eyes glittering with an excitement that struck me as uncanny. The attendant, of course, had immediately recognized the person he was guiding through the building. In a businesslike but distinctly aloof manner, he showed us through the rooms. When we were at last getting ready to leave the building, Hitler whispered something to his adjutant Brueckner, who took a fifty-mark note from his wallet and went over to the attendant standing some distance away. Pleasantly, but firmly, the man refused to take the money. Hitler tried a second time, sending Breker over to him; but the man persisted in his refusal. He had only been doing his duty, he told Breker.'

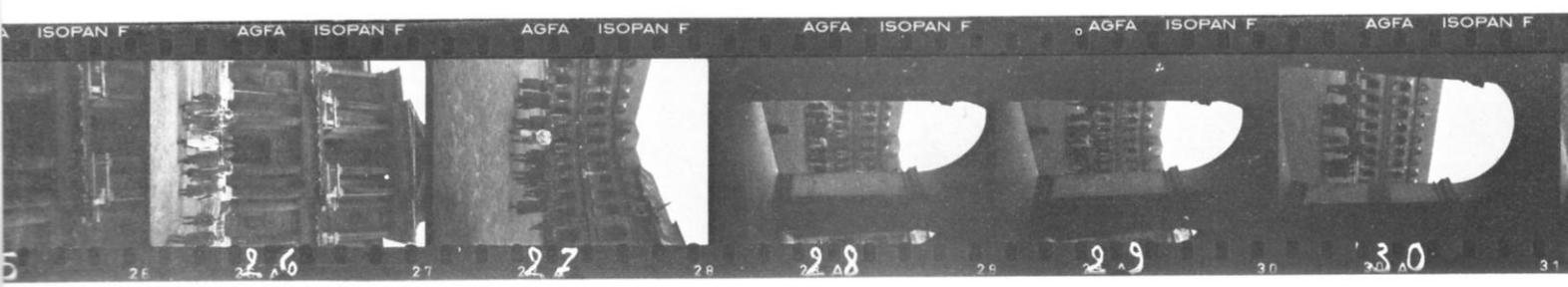
After Hoffmann had taken two more pictures (4 and 5) of the group leaving the Opera House, the convoy continued via the Boulevard des Capucines to the Madeline. Three more photographs (6-8) were taken by Hoffmann as the group descended the steps.

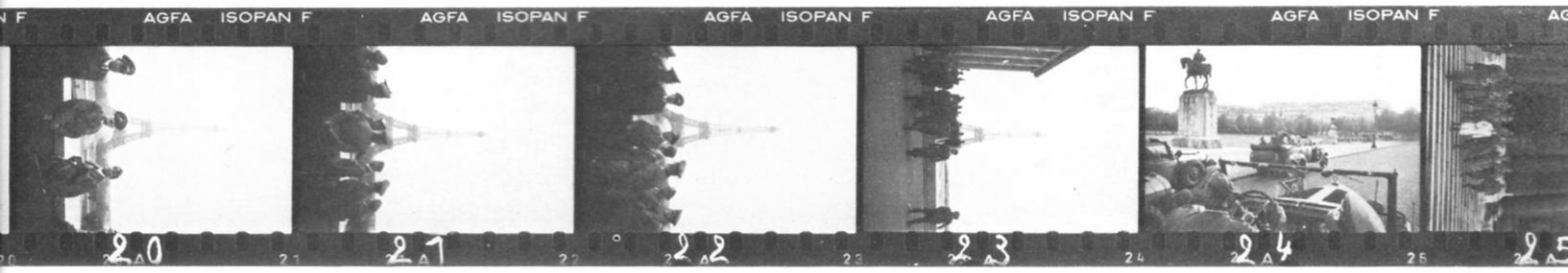
Moving south on Rue Royale, the cine-film recorded the scene as the cars reached the Place de la Concorde and turned right to rise up the 2km-long Avenue des Champs Elysees. At this point, Hitler ordered the cars to stop so that he could fully appreciate the magnificent view up to the Arc de Triomphe—a view he intended to surpass with his own triumphal arch to be constructed on the new north-south avenue planned for Berlin.

With both the cine-cameraman and Hoffmann exposing film (frames 9-14), the cars ascended the hill, circuited the Etoile and proceeded down Avenue Foch. Reaching the Avenue Poincare, the cavalcade turned left to the Place du Trocadero (the wrong way round the roundabout) where Hitler ordered another stop, well illustrated in frames 15-23. In frame 20, the cine-cameraman can be seen in the foreground taking the well-known piece of film showing Hitler before the Eiffel Tower.

After returning to the cars (23), the journey continued by crossing the Seine via the Pont d'Iena, past the Eiffel Tower and the deserted Parc du Champ de Mars for a stop outside the Ecole Militaire (frame 24).

Frame 10. Entering the Champs Elysees, Hitler stands up as the cars stop for Arno Breker to point back at the Louvre.





Frame 14. The cine-cameraman can be seen standing in the second car, as the cars circumvent the Etoile.

Continuing to the Place Vauban, Hitler entered the Dome des Invalides to see the tomb of Napoleon. Changing his heavy leather coat for a lighter one, he stood for a long time contemplating the great marble tomb. His entourage were expecting Hitler to say something appropriate but what he said surprised them. He spoke of Napoleon's son, the Duc de Reichstadt, whose remains rested in Vienna, and he ordered that they be transferred to Paris to lie next to his father. As he turned to leave, Hoffmann could see that he was profoundly moved. 'That', Hitler said softly, 'was the greatest and finest moment of my life'.

Another two photographs were taken as the party descended the steps (frames 25 and 26) before the party moved through the church of St. Louis (behind the Dome) to the courtyard of the Hotel des Invalides where the cars were waiting.

The next part of the tour was not photographed by Hoffmann but ran via the Quai d'Orsay, Chambre de Deputies, across the Rue de Lille and along the Boulevard St. Germain. It continued past the French War Ministry and the Rue Bonaparte to St. Sulpice church and the Palais du Luxembourg. The convoy then drove slowly to the Odeon Theatre and down the Boulevard St. Michel and Rue Soufflot to the Pantheon, built over the grave of St. Genevieve, the patron saint of Paris. However, Hitler was not interested in the building, 'possibly', Arno Breker says, 'because of its interior architecture which, in spite of its massive scale, lacked any feeling of warmth'.

With the tour half completed, Breker records that Hitler wanted to get an impression of the surroundings in which he, himself, had lived and worked. The journey therefore continued south to the Boulevard Montparnasse to the Cafe Closerie des Lilas where Breker showed Hitler the fantastic plastic art 'Rudes' by Marechal Ney.

Then, retracing their route back along the Boulevard St. Michel, being saluted by some French policemen on the way (to which Hitler replied), they passed the Square de Cluny. Pointing to a dome on the right-hand side of the street, Hitler asked Breker if this was the Tribunal du Chambre de Commerce. Breker remembers that he said no, and that he believed it to be the dome of the Institut de France. When they passed the building Hitler said, amused: 'Look what it says, Chambre de Commerce'. Breker comments that Hitler 'really had prepared himself well for this visit so that he was able to compete quite well using his theoretical knowledge against an old Parisian!'

The next stop was at the Palais de Justice where they saw the St. Chapelle, the only part

Left: Hitler's Mercedes pulls up at the Trocadero—a cine still. Above: We had to park the correct way round!

of the old French castle to be spared the fire which destroyed it in the 17th Century.

Breker says that having got into a Gothic mood, they then visited the highlight of any Paris tour, the nearby Notre Dame. Afterwards, crossing from the Ile de la Cite, via the Pont d'Arcole, they stopped at the Hotel de Ville. Then, diverting eastward, they visited the Musee Carnavalet, passing thence via the Place des Vosges, to the Rue de Rivoli and Les Halles, the market centre of Paris. Breker says there were few people about, a sign that the city had been evacuated, as under normal circumstances this part of Paris would have resembled a picture of colourful, vivid activity.

'Suddenly', says Breker, 'in the quiet of the morning we heard the hoarse call of a newspaper salesman coming nearer and nearer. "Le matin! Le matin!" He turned into the Rue de Rivoli, saw the convoy of cars and jumped forward. He offered us a newspaper in his stretched out hand. Suddenly he recognized Hitler. The call "Le Matin" died on his lips, he stared and then, panic-stricken, dropped all his newspapers and ran to the safety of the nearest open doorway.

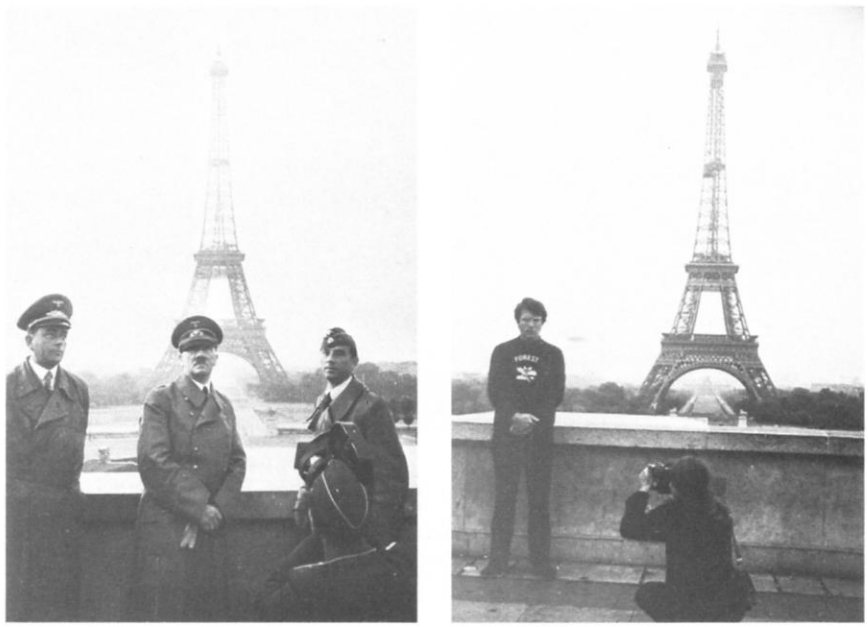
'Barely a hundred yards further on, at the corner of the Rue des Halles, stood a small group of market women, stout, self-assured and full of temperament. Reaching them, the biggest of the women suddenly stretched out her arms and pointed to Hitler and, full of enthusiasm, she shouted: "It's him! It's him!"—whereupon the group dispersed.

'These were the only human contacts during our trip around the city,' continues Breker: 'the attendant at the Opera, the terrified reaction of the newspaper man and the enthusiastic market women.'

Continuing along the Rue de Rivoli, the Louvre was quickly visible on the left, 'I do not hesitate to mark this grand building as one of the most ingenious ideas of all architecture' was Hitler's spontaneous reaction.

Hitler was also visibly impressed with the continuous arcade running for almost a kilometre on the right-hand side of the Rue de Rivoli. As a result, Hitler arranged that at a forthcoming meeting on the re-design of German cities, the layout of the streets should be given further thought. Breker says that the architectural scene was especially imprinted on his own mind as all the disturbing elements such as noise, traffic and parked cars were absent.

Hitler's route continued back past the Opera, along the Rue de la Chausee d'Antin to Place de Clichy and on to Pigalle and Montmartre. From there it ran via the roundabout route, around the many small streets, necessary to reach the Basilique du Sacre-Coeur, the final stop.



Above left: Frame 20—probably Hoffmann's most famous picture. Albert Speer, Adolf Hitler and Arno Breker with their backs to the Seine and the Pont d'lena bridge. The cameraman can be seen taking the well-known piece of film, a frame of which is reproduced below (IWM). Above right: An 'Old Forester' stands in for Albert Speer!

Frame 24. Beside the statue of Marechal Joffre.

'From up there,' says Breker, 'the panorama of the city, now plunged into radiant sunshine, resembled an enormous tapestry with beautiful patterns whose most eminent features stood out.'

'Many churchgoers recognised Hitler,' says Speer, 'but ignored him.'

Here, Hoffmann started a second roll of film, exposing the first thirteen frames.

'Lost in thought,' Breker records, 'Hitler turned away from the panoramic view, and threw a quick look at the Sacre Coeur—this unusual building with its oriental Remini scenes, embodied the whole spirit of Paris, which has always proved such an unusual attractive influence, especially for painters. The quietness that surrounded us was interrupted by Hitler, who said "I thank my good fortune that I have seen the city whose prestige has always occupied my thoughts. At the beginning of the war, I ordered the troops to bypass Paris, and to avoid any fighting in the vicinity, because it was important to preserve this culture for generations to come. In this I was successful".'

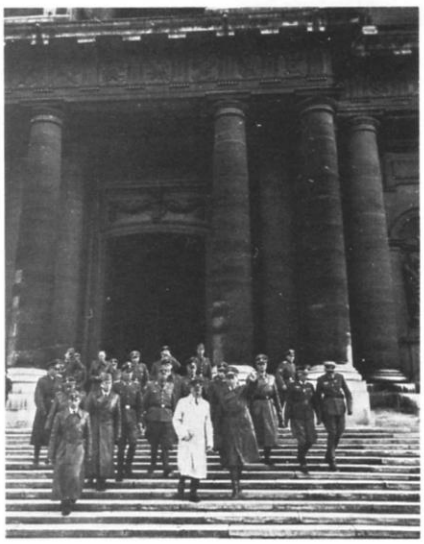
By 8.15 a.m., the tour was over and the party returned to Le Bourget (frames 14-22). When they were airborne, Hitler asked his pilot Baur to circle several times over Paris, partly obscured by the haze so typical for an early summer's day in Paris. Hoffmann finished exposing his roll of film, whereupon Baur turned to fly back to Gros Caillou. Hitler confided to Albert Speer:

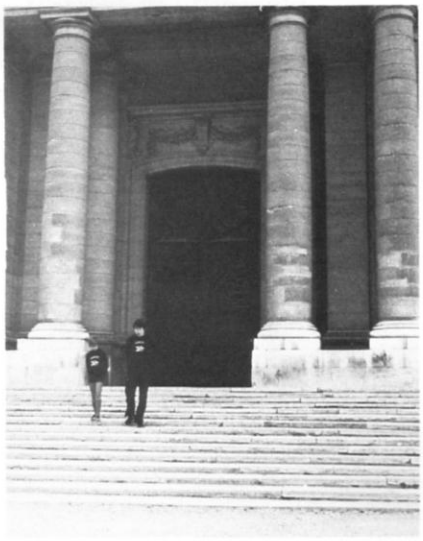
'It was the dream of my life to be permitted to see Paris. I cannot say how happy I am to have that dream fulfilled today.'

'For a moment,' Speer says, 'I felt something like pity for him: three hours in Paris, the one and only time he was to see it, made him happy when he stood at the height of his triumphs.'

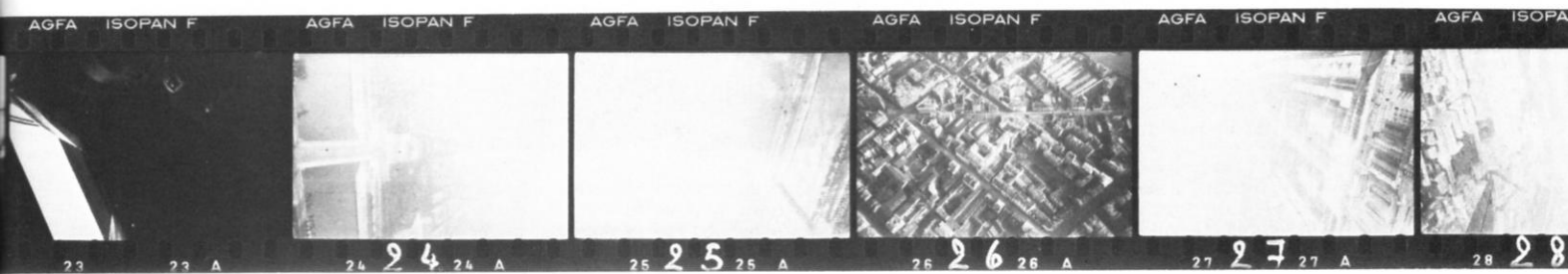
Although Hitler had visited Paris in June and we were in the city in August, we had decided to retrace the actual route at as near as possible the actual time that Hitler had driven it in 1940.

However, in the thirty-six years separating the two events, the creation of one-way streets, traffic islands and no waiting zones with an intolerable traffic level would obviously make this a hazardous undertaking. We couldn't even enter Paris by Hitler's route from Le Bourget as the Rue La Fayette is now one way—the wrong way. With the imminent return of Parisians after their August shutdown, the last possible date when the roads would be relatively clear was Sunday, August 29, 1976. The two other members of the After the Battle team were therefore persuaded to awaken at 4.30 a.m. and, by 5.00 a.m., we were ready. Fully equipped with Arno Breker's route (detailed in his book 'Im Strahlungsfeld der Ereignisse'); a map kindly provided on a previous visit to Albert Speer in Germany and a full set of Heinrich Hoffmann's photographs (which we have reproduced in full in contact form), we set off.





Frame 25. Leaving the Dome des Invalides after visiting the tomb of Napoleon. Alas, it was still shut when we were there at the not-unreasonable hour of 7.30 a.m.!



Although the traffic at that early hour was light, the editor was dissuaded from following the exact route down one-way streets. At the Opera, there was no armed escort to greet us and no attendant to show us round—it was closed for the August shut-down!

As we stopped briefly at the Madeline, as Hitler had done, it started to rain. We risked parking in the middle of the Rue Royale and at the beginning of the Avenue des Champs Elysees to match pictures; the editor dancing between irate taxis and late-night revellers (or early morning hangovers). Approaching the Arc de Triomphe we stopped again, just before the tunnel which now runs under it to the Avenue de la Grande Armee and again, right in the middle of the Etoile roundabout, much to the consternation of the female member of our team! At this point in the Hoffmann still (frame 14), the cine-camera-man can be seen standing up in the second car taking a high shot of the Arc de Triomphe before continuing down the Avenue Foch.

A word ought to be said here about this film, the original of which was given by Albert Speer to the Bundesarchiv in Germany. When clips of this are shown on television, this is often edited in an order pleasing to the film director, but incorrect as far as chronology. This occurred with the very popular Thames TV 'World at War' series where Hitler is shown leaving his car at the Madeline before visiting the Opera!

We continued our route through the deserted Avenue Foch (feeling sure Hitler would not have stopped at the traffic lights), into Avenue Raymond Poincare. At the Palais de Chaillot, Hitler's convoy had gone the wrong way around the Place du Trocadero; we felt that this would hardly be a good reason to give a French traffic court, so our Land-Rover had to be pictured the wrong (or right) way round.

The deserted Trocadero was the setting for the very well-known picture of Hitler in front of the Eiffel Tower (Hoffmann frame 20) although usually Albert Speer and Arno Breker are masked out.

We then proceeded via the Avenue de Suffren for a brief stop beside the statue of Marechal Joffre on his horse at the bottom of the Champ de Mars before continuing to the Invalides. Here we matched the picture of Hitler leaving the building, although the Dome itself, where the tomb of Napoleon can be seen, was closed. There was no chance of the French opening up the building five hours early for us. Likewise we were given a short, rude answer when we asked the gendarme guard at the Hotel des Invalides to be permitted to drive into the courtyard as the 1940 convoy had done.

We then followed the original route as near as possible allowing for one way streets and some road works near the Quai d'Orsay. For some reason Heinrich Hoffmann finished roll 5073 leaving the Invalides and didn't start shooting roll 5074 until they reached the Sacre Coeur. We chose to do the same. We did, however, drive the route south of the Seine, over the Ile de la Cite and passed the Hotel de Ville. Les Halles, off to the right is now a large construction site surrounded by horrible, narrow, one-way streets and road works. Passing the old German HQ in the Hotel Meurice, behind the arcades of the Rue de Rivoli, we turned right—back up the Rue Royale, repassing the Opera to Pigalle.

We then wended our way, using the Rue Caulaincourt and Rue Lamarck, up Montmartre hill and stopped on the Place du Parvis de Sacre Coeur. Here, where Hoffmann had taken several pictures overlooking the sleeping city, we were lucky enough to find a German couple in their car; sleeping like babes in each other's arms. Blissfully unaware of our presence and curiously watched by a road-sweeper as he cleared the night's battle debris of broken bottles from the steps, we matched our photos.

Frame 27. The party crosses the courtyard of the Hotel des Invalides after visiting the church of St. Louis. Virtually nothing has changed today.

Above: Frame 5, second roll. Hitler looks at the Basilique du Sacre Coeur at the last stop of his three-hour tour. His view of the church would be very similar to that on page 14. Below: Two Germans sleep blissfully in their car as we match our photograph.

After our zig-zag route across the deserted city (admirably described by Arno Breker in German as a 'Zick-Zack-Fahrt') we increased speed to Le Bourget. By the time we arrived, the rebuilt airport terminal building was packed with travellers, their coaches and cars rushing madly around to the accompaniment of the whine of jet motors. There we pondered—dare we put out a page for Pilot Hans Baur?

The Occupation

Top: General Walter Warlimont, Deputy Chief of Staff of the OKW Operations Staff, taking off in his Fieseler Storch after landing in the Place de la Concorde on July 14. Another aircraft can be seen parked in the background outside the Hotel Crillon (Bundesarchiv).

One of the first German problems of the occupation was the policing of the city. Early on June 14, as soon as the German headquarters had been established in the Hotel Crillon, word was sent to Roger Langeron, Prefect of Police, to report to the German Commandant at 11.00 a.m. At the meeting, a working arrangement was made with the Police Chief with orders for him to submit daily reports. The Germans also requested the police dossiers on all those persons who were politically active. As these had already been removed from Paris, M. Langeron could not oblige, much to the anger of the German commander. Roger Langeron, who was arrested on January 21, 1941, was the first of four Chiefs of Police who had to walk the tightrope of maintaining law and order without visible collaboration with the occupying forces.

The Germans wanted to create an acquiescent, if not actively co-operative, government in order to tie up the least number of German troops with occupation duties. All purchases were therefore paid for—in occupation marks with an exchange rate of twenty francs to the mark (the pre-war rate was four francs to one mark). This clever way of exhorting reparations was estimated to be costing France 400 million francs a day in 1940. As shipments of fresh foodstuffs arrived at the markets, German supply officers were ready to take first choice, and goods soon disappeared from France to reappear in Germany.

Although controlled by the German progaganda organisation at No. 52 Champs Elysees, the French newspapers reappeared again on June 17. Surprisingly, the Communist Press was also allowed to publish due to the Nazi-Soviet pact then still in force. The Communists were useful to the Germans in persuading Frenchmen to return to work as the Party saw the Germans as a means to hasten the destruction of 'imperialist' Britain.

On June 23, three large cinemas in the Champs Elysees reopened with a fourth, the Marigan, being reserved for German Army personnel. It was the Germans' intention to keep Paris, with its famed night life, alive to entertain soldiers on leave from other fronts. Curfew was gradually reduced so that 11.00 p.m. became the established hour for all Frenchmen to be indoors.

As with every occupation, the initial front-line troops were soon replaced with the rear-echelon bureaucrats with their inevitable search for luxury. The Luxembourg Palace was taken over by Feldmarschall Sperrle for Air Force headquarters whilst Herman Goering sumptiously furnished a flat for his visits to the capital. Every luxury hotel was taken over while the Polytechnique and Normale Superieure schools became barracks. The huge Hotel Meurice became the headquarters of the Military Governor. Soon the Gestapo and SD arrived to handle internal security and counter-espionage, the former taking over the Ministere de l'Interieur building in the Rue des Saussaies, the latter Nos. 82-86 Avenue Foch.

Outwardly, the Germans tried to win over the Parisians (and Frenchmen in general) and it was in December 1940 that Hitler's plan to return the body of Napoleon's son to France was carried out. Pressure had been brought to bear on the Austrians to give up the body of Francis who had lain, for more than a hundred years, in the ancient Capuchini crypt in Vienna. In a midnight torchlight procession on December 15, organised by the German ambassador Otto Abetz, the bronze coffin was carried through the streets of Paris towards the Invalides. However, the ceremony went sadly wrong when Marechal Petain, head of the Vichy puppet Government, failed to appear at the ceremony to claim the body for France!

The German Military Kommandantur office on the Place de l'Opera, photographed on January 2, 1941 (Bundesarchiv).

The same corner of the Avenue de l'Opera and the Rue Quatre Septembre; the building is now the National Bank of France.

Left and above: A German gun-crew firmly dissuade anyone from using the Gare de l'Est (Bundesarchiv). Although thirty-odd years separate these two photographs, only the clock has changed.

Left and above: No date is given for this picture taken in the Place Palais Royale of German horse-drawn transport (Bundesarchiv). Today, the English still drive using German horsepower!

Left and above: Troops congregate outside the Kriegsmarine in the Rue de Rivoli (Bundesarchiv). Now under the new management of the French Ministere de la Marine.

Left and above: Two German soldiers, photographed on March 15, 1941, examine a cannon dated 1778 from the Antwerp Fortress (Bundesarchiv). It is still on exactly the same spot today.

Marechal Petain was head of the Vichy Government, which had been set up under the terms of the armistice, and allowed to govern the southern part of France not occupied by the Germans. However, as far as many Frenchmen were concerned, this collaboration with the occupying Germans tarnished Vichy with the same brush. The existence in England of Charles de Gaulle with his self-styled 'Free French' forces caused a split in loyalties and fostered the growth of the maquis or French Resistance movement—in Paris largely controlled by the Communists.

Food is a part of the French way of life and the increasing lack of it during the occupation was a leading topic of conversation. Rationing led to a black market which was well organised by September 1940. Worse still was the cold winter ahead, for the Germans had better things to do than transport coal to the city. Petrol was strictly rationed and, as the roads emptied of all but official vehicles, most people turned to using the Metro underground.

On August 11, 1942 the first French labour units left for Germany. A deal had been made with the Vichy Government to release one French prisoner-of-war for every three Frenchmen that volunteered to work in German factories. However, although the Germans had demanded 150,000 men, by October, four months after the first appeal had been made, only seven thousand had left France. Deportation was bound to follow the failure to attract volunteers and this German thirst for manpower directly led to the expansion of the French Resistance movement. In October, Gauleiter Fritz Sauckel demanded another 250,000 men and, as the labour draft loomed up, many eligible young men simply disappeared to the unoccupied southern zone.

In Paris there could be no proper maquis as such (the Corsican word means 'the bush') as there was no bush to hide in. However, false papers, frequent name changes and switches in lodgings were all a part of the life of the town 'resistant' and friends that harboured them took their lives in their own hands.

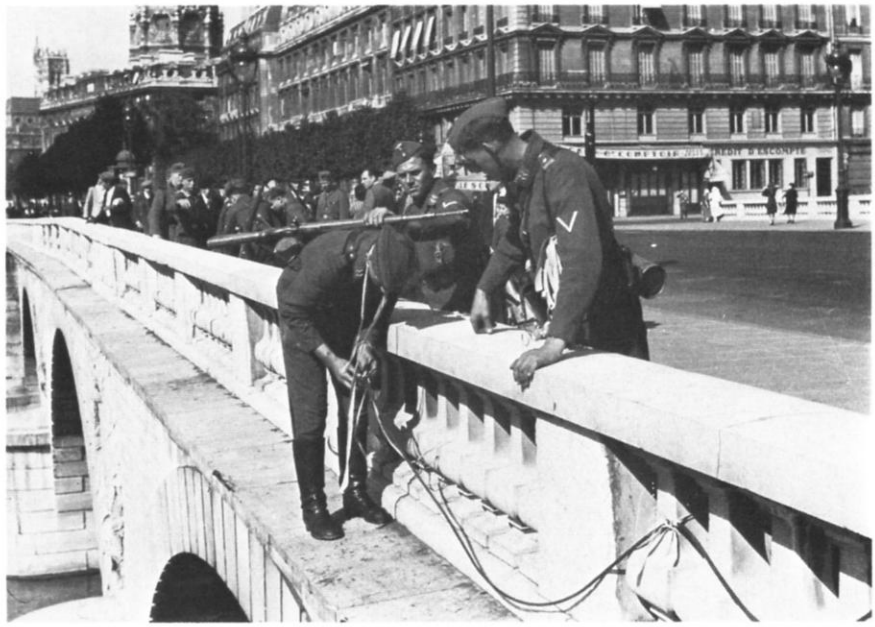
By 1944, the Germans had become so desperate for workers that they assigned all Frenchmen from sixteen to sixty to the labour service. Almost every family was affected and, as a result, the spirit of resistance grew, fostered from England by the broadcasts of Charles de Gaulle (which had begun on June 18, 1940).

At the same time, there were Frenchmen who collaborated with the occupying forces, some even zealously assisting them in their attempts to crush the Resistance movement by joining the dreaded Vichy police: the Milice.

The Milice was formed by Frenchman Joseph Darnand in January 1943 with recognition by Vichy as a police organisation, to maintain order in the unoccupied zone. However, Darnand turned the 25,000 Milice into a French Waffen SS and worked in close collaboration with the German SS and Gestapo. In Paris they were virtually a French arm of the SS which was headed by Obergruppenfuhrer Karl Oberg. Naturally they earned a hatred from their countrymen beyond anything felt for the Germans.

However, the various resistance units which sprang up, whilst united in a common goal of opposing the Germans, were not yet co-ordinated or effective as a single body. De Gaulle in London therefore set about unifying these groupings under his own central direction.

In September 1941, the Mayor of Chartres, Jean Moulin, had escaped to London, having already successfully made contact with various Resistance movements. After conferring with the General, Moulin offered to return to France to co-ordinate the various groups. He parachuted back into France on January 1, 1942 and on May 27, 1943 presided at the first, unified meeting of Resistance leaders at 48 Rue du Four, Paris. Unanimously, the meeting accepted the leadership of General de Gaulle. Jean Moulin was responsible, more than anyone else, for the co-ordination and actual effectiveness of the Resistance. Just one month after the all-important meeting in Paris, he was arrested by the Gestapo and died en route to a German concentration camp.



Above: Although the caption to this picture has been lost, it would seem as if these airmen are disconnecting demolition charges to the Pont St. Michel. In the background is the Prefecture de Police building on the Ile de la Cite—HQ for the French resistance in 1944 (Bundesarchiv). Below: Curious tourists wonder what we are up to today.

The Conseil National de la Resistance, in whose creation Moulin had played a vital part, included not only Resistance units, but political party and labour organisations as well. Also, after Hitler's attack on Russia in June 1941, the Communist influence in the French resistance increased.

The first violent act against the Germans in Paris had come on August 21, 1941. A young German naval officer candidate was shot in Barches-Rochechouart Metro station by a twenty-two-year-old Communist, Pierre Georges (he was later to adopt the code name 'Fabien', become a colonel and one of the principal Resistance leaders).

The reaction of the occupation authorities was immediate and violent. A notice proclaiming that all Parisians arrested thereafter were to be considered hostages and that the death of a German occupation soldier would call for multiple shootings of hostages. Additionally a million-franc reward was offered (about £1,000).

'Colonel Rol', the Communist militant later in charge of the Paris Resistance at the liberation, has described his feelings: 'We went through some agonising hours,' he said. 'We were tormented by scruples, self-questioning, anguish.' But, he concluded, even at the price of this precious blood of hostages, France could not afford to be presented to the world as a passive prostrate country without will to resist or react. The price had to be paid, Rol believed, bitter as it was.

Before the end of August, eight French prisoners had been shot at Mont Valerien followed by twenty-two in September. Before the executions were over, more than a hundred and fifty people had paid with their lives. However, if a resistant was asked the question 'Does it make sense to see the execution of five or six of our own people just to get a revolver

Left: The scene at the Gare du Nord on November 6, 1940 (Bundesarchiv). Above: Queuing for an 'Ausweis' — 1976-style!

or a rifle from the Germans?' the reply was 'Yes. For every time they announce the execution of five or six of our people, we enrol fifty or a hundred more volunteers in the Resistance.'

Opposition, active and passive, mounted. On September 16, 1943, Julius Ritter, Gauleiter Fritz Saukel's assistant, was shot in broad daylight on the Etoile. As a result, fifty hostages were taken in reprisal and shot within a month.

Another danger came from Allied air raids over France, which had slowly increased after American entry into the war. These had brought a two-fold risk to the population: the direct one from the bombing and the indirect one of the death penalty for sheltering shot-down Allied airmen. By 1944, the suburbs of Paris had suffered their share of these air attacks and it was increasingly evident to the people that the invasion could not be far away. On April 21, a heavy night raid struck at St. Denis and the Gare de la Chapelle, one of the biggest marshalling yards in Paris. The death toll amounted to 640 Parisians, and Vichy were not slow to reap the propaganda benefits. Five days later, Marechal Petain visited Paris for a requiem mass at Notre Dame and visited the injured in hospital.

During March, final efforts were made to weld all the various Resistance groups into one. Already de Gaulle had sent his military representatives to every corner of the country to liaise the maquis with London. As de Gaulle wrote: 'I created the Forces Francaises de l'Interieur (FFI) and all groups are to place themselves under the command of General Koenig in regular military groups of sections, companies, battalions and regiments.'

Paris remained calm at the news of the invasion as, no doubt, there were many Frenchmen with memories of Dieppe. Vichy, however, was not slow to react. Darnand, head of the Milice, who had also become Vichy Secretary of State for the Maintenance of Order, proclaimed: 'Consider as enemies of France the "Francs-Tireurs et Partisans", the members of the alleged secret army and of resistance groups. Fight against saboteurs . . . track down all who seek to undermine the morale of our units (the Milice).'

With this portent of civil war, de Gaulle landed in France for a one-day visit on June 17. Although the effect of the Resistance had been minimal in Normandy itself, if the Allied command ever had doubts as to its usefulness, they were firmly dispelled when a force of two thousand maquis won a pitched battle with the Germans at Malestroit in Brittany, capturing the whole peninsula for the FFI.

Above: The Basilique du Sacre Coeur on top of Montmartre hill—a continual tourist attraction whether in war . . . or peace (Bundesarchiv).

Left and above: Another part of Paris which seems timeless; only the people change (Bundesarchiv).

The Battle of Paris

On Bastille Day, June 14, 1944, Paris awoke from its four-year coma. There were gatherings in many parts of the city; the tricolour appeared and crowds sang the Marseillaise. Posters appeared summoning the men and women of Paris to arms in the name of the Communist Front National. The notice urged every patriot to kill a German, Milicien or a traitor. It called for a general strike and the immediate attack of German convoys, then leaving the city for the Normandy front.

The same day, a new German military commandant arrived to take charge of Paris, General Dietrich von Choltitz, his task: how to get the German personnel out of Paris with as little disorder and loss as possible.

The very next day brought news of a second invasion in the south, the attackers including a formidable French force, the First French Army under General Jean de Lattre de Tassigny.

Then, on August 1, the French 2nd Armoured Division, with an impressive record of conquests stretching across Africa, landed in France. It was commanded by the soldier-aristocrat Phillipe de Hauteclocque, better known by his immortal pseudonym—General Leclerc. Word of his arrival soon permeated to the Parisians.

The Resistance forces in Paris were now led by 'Colonel Rol' a French Communist, Henri Georges Rene Tanguy, who had fought in the Spanish Civil War and the defence of France in 1940, for which he had been awarded the Croix de Guerre.

Under his leadership, acts of violence increased, especially on the left bank (really the southern side) of the Seine. Several German convoys were fired on and a strike of railwaymen paralysed the capital on August 10. The strike was vigorously maintained in spite of the strict German decrees against such occurrences. It was the first stoppage on so large a scale since the Occupation began and it was militantly conducted—even to the extent of flying picket squads putting pressure on waverers at pistol point!

For the Resistance, the strike was a dangerous move, as the Germans were relying to an increasing extent on the rail network to evacuate personnel from the city. Fearful of the strike spreading, three days later, on August 13, the Germans began to disarm the police.

The twenty-thousand police in Paris represented the largest array of organisation and armament available to the Resistance. They had been allowed to retain their arms to maintain law and order during the Occupation, but ninety per cent were still strongly anti-German. Something had to be done quickly, before the Germans withdrew the teeth from this vital force.

On the 14th, Colonel Rol met police representatives and a strike was agreed upon. Police were to put aside their uniforms, keep their arms and join the active Resistance on the streets.

On the 15th it happened; the support was total. Thousands of men, each armed with a pistol and ammunition, were now attached to the central organisation of the Resistance. Where active resistants had been numbered in hundreds, they now totalled thousands.

Von Choltitz, who had received orders from the now-deranged Hitler to destroy Paris (what a contrast to his remarks made on his own visit to the city in 1940), made no move to do so. Apart from the fact that he did not have the means at his disposal, von Choltitz could see no military reason for doing so. Instead, he occupied key buildings throughout the city, turning them into German strongpoints. Apart from the German Kommandantur in the Place de l'Opera and his own HQ at the Hotel Meurice in the Rue de Rivoli, other fortresses were created in the Ecole Militaire, Quai d'Orsay, Chamber of Deputies, Senate Building, Palais Bourbon the Kriegsmarine, Hotel des Invalides, the Palais du Luxembourg and the Prince Eugene barracks on the Place de la Republique.

Above: The beginnings of the Resistance uprising in the Rue de Rivoli. Note the FFI man is holding an MG34 with saddle-drum magazine (Associated Press). Below: We found the exact location to be outside No. 33, which is very close to the Hotel de Ville.

Paris had now literally no government. The Germans no longer held working control of the city and von Choltitz held numerous meetings with municipal authorities urging them to keep essential supplies moving—the water, food, fuel and telephones without which any modern city cannot last but a few days.

For three days the Resistance leadership wavered, wondering if they had the strength to oppose the Germans. General Koenig's representative, who had arrived in Paris on the 16th, urged them to sit tight and not escalate the strike into a battle. He warned that the American Command was not planning to call for the city's surrender until it had been by-passed and was well encircled.

However, the tricolour was already flying over the Hotel de Ville, the traditional, symbolic stronghold of Paris and the police themselves decided that the time was *now*. Two thousand of their number were ordered to rendezvouz outside the Prefecture (or HQ) of the Paris Police, facing the Notre Dame on the Ile de la Cite, the island on the Seine linked by nine bridges to the heart of Paris.

At 7.00 a.m. on Saturday, August 19, after the leaders arrived and a few rifles and machine guns had been distributed, the strikers approached the main door of the Prefecture. When it was opened, the policemen, dressed in civilian clothes, poured into the large inner court around which the Prefecture is built. A tricolour flag was raised and the Marseillaise was sung.

Colonel Rol was amazed when he heard of the precipitate action by the police, stealing the thunder of the Communists, and he arrived post haste at the Prefecture on a bicycle. Once inside, he changed into his uniform ready to take command of all Paris. Units were sent out to take charge of police sub-stations and occupy the nearby Palais de

Above: Two policemen or 'Gardiens de la Paix' in civilian clothes firing from a window of the Prefecture de Police, which has been damaged by a tank shell (Associated Press).

Above: We think this is probably the best comparison from our visit to Paris. The window overlooks the Seine, although invisible from this angle, to the buildings on the Quai St. Michel.

Justice, whilst the Prefecture was sandbagged and the windows manned to meet the expected German attack.

It came at 2.00 p.m. A single German armoured vehicle appeared in the Boulevard du Palais and raked the windows with automatic fire. This was returned, the police firing at the German infantry trying to cross the Petit Pont. Other German vehicles arrived and three were set on fire.

The Germans now brought up tanks which lumbered into position opposite the main gates of the Prefecture. The first shell demolished a section of the huge main door, but a police bus was quickly moved to block the gap. Surprisingly, the tanks declined to press home the attack, leaving this to the German infantry advancing across the Pont St. Michel and across the rooftops. Both attacks were driven off but fighting spread to the left bank where several German vehicles were destroyed. By nightfall, over six hundred Germans had been captured.

The Resistance leaders, who had successfully defended the Police Prefecture, now cast their eyes towards the Hotel de Ville, clearly visible across the Seine. At 6.30 a.m. the next day, Sunday, some sixty FFIs approached the building and were admitted without incident. Men were stationed at the windows and any approaching German vehicle was greeted with a hail of rifle and pistol fire. By now hundreds of small skirmishes had broken out all over the city as local Resistance units gained control of their own 'Mairies'.

In spite of the fact that the Germans had begun to retreat into their strongpoints, the de Gaulle representatives were worried. They had been instructed to hold off any insurrection which would force the Allies to fight for the city and compromise the plan to make it surrender later of its own accord. The Supreme Commander also did not want the burden of feeding Paris when his own supply routes were already overstretched.

It was understood that von Choltitz would be favourable to a truce to enable the Germans to evacuate Paris without bloodshed and accordingly a meeting was arranged by the Swedish Consul, Raoul Nordling, together with the Council of National Resistance.

Nordling had already been making efforts since the invasion, through the Swedish King, to have Paris declared an open city as it had been in 1940. Now, by noon on Sunday, he was able to agree the following truce between the Germans and the FFI:

1. Evacuation of German troops from Paris was to be conducted by the outer boulevards, avoiding the centre of the city.
2. The FFI were recognised by the Germans as regular soldiers with the right to be treated according to the laws of war.
3. The Germans agreed to accept the occupation of the Prefecture, the Hotel de Ville, the various suburban mairies and other buildings and not to attack or interfere with FFI personnel occupying them.
4. The FFI agreed not to attack the Germans within the limits of their strongpoints and headquarters.

However, the truce could not be made entirely effective as the Communists refused to accept it, as did the German SS and, by the evening, fighting had broken out again. German tanks accompanied by armoured vehicles rumbled between the German strongpoints ready to reply to any shots fired, and sandbagged machine gun nests were set up.

The FFI began building barricades, the first of hundreds to appear all over the city. Trees were felled, cobbles ripped up and sandbags, kept in most buildings as a protection against incendiaries, were handed down to make ramparts. These were eagerly manned by the FFI, nearly all in civilian clothes, sometimes with the addition of an old WWI steel helmet, always with the FFI armband.

Meanwhile, the seizure of government buildings by the Resistance continued, including newspaper offices and banks. The

Spang marks from the first tank shot still disfigure the entrance to the Prefecture.

Resistance leadership now accepted the inevitable and, at a heated meeting on Monday afternoon, decided to denounce the truce at 5.00 p.m. the next day, Tuesday 22nd. When he heard this, Nordling, disturbed by the thought of Paris becoming a battleground, proposed a mission through German lines to ask the Americans to speed up their entry into the city.

By Wednesday morning (23rd), General Patton of the Third Army was listening to Nordling's story. Patton telephoned General Bradley and then sent the delegation on to meet him. General Bradley was soon convinced he must change his original plan and immediately flew to meet with General Eisenhower at Granville on the French coast. The Supreme Commander instantly approved and, following a pre-arranged plan, Bradley gave the honour of capturing Paris to General Leclerc's 2nd Armoured Division.

Below: A tricolour flies at one of the barricades, typical of those built by the FFI. This one was beside the Rue de Rennes at the entrance to Rue Sainte Placide.

Above: Members of the FFI, mostly policemen, fire across the Pont Neuf Bridge to the Ile de la Cite (IWM). Below: A drunk suns himself, oblivious to all.

The Liberation

The French 2nd Armoured Division had nearly sixty miles to cover to reach Paris when it set out on Wednesday, August 23, and the German defensive screen in front of Paris was by no means negligible. The division comprised 16,000 men, 4,200 vehicles, 200 Sherman tanks and 650 artillery pieces.

By the evening, the houses of Rambouillet, 30 miles from Paris, were shaking to the thunder of Leclerc's columns. His original intention, to take the shortest route, and drive hell-for-leather down the road through Rambouillet and Versailles into the capital, had to be altered. Reports had reached him that the Germans had spread deep minefields there, backed with a strong force of tanks. Instead, Leclerc decided to make a feint approach along the Versailles route but drive his main force round to come up from the south, through Arpajon and Longjumeau, to enter by the Porte d'Orleans.

As dawn broke on August 24, Leclerc sent the division charging in upon Paris in three columns. The force going down the Versailles road commanded by Major Francois Morel-Deville had orders to 'make a big noise'. Lieutenant-Colonel Paul de Langlade's group was to weave in along the green valley of the Chevreuse, Colonel Pierre Billotte's main striking force was to drive boldly up to Longjumeau and Croix-de-Berney through the southern Porte d'Orleans, backed by Colonel Dio's group. The American 4th Infantry Division was to follow, also from the south, but further east along the line of the Seine through Orly.

In the beginning there was negligible opposition. Instead there were crowds of yelling, cheering,weeping, wildly waving French men, women and children thronging the roads delirious with joy. Sometimes the troops could hardly move forward for fear of running down the pressing crowds and the view ahead was fogged with waving flags. Food, flowers and wine were thrust into and onto tanks, lorries and armoured cars. And the girls—it seemed to the French soldiers that they would be overwhelmed, choked to death with kisses, kisses and more kisses.

Some, halted by the crowds, tried now to telephone wives and parents from whose lives they had vanished those long bitter years ago. And fantastically, it was often possible!

But the heady road of triumph was to cease abruptly. A series of formidable strongpoints covered all entries, each based on batteries of 88-mm. guns, of which some 150 barred the way to Paris. The first barrage struck the French tanks near the airfield of Toussus-le-Noble and, as the Shermans undulated one after the other over a ridge, so one after the other they erupted into flames.

Another furious battle developed at Fresnes where, covering the main route of the N20 into the city, the prison had been converted into a small but formidable fortress. Rapidly deploying into three groups the French charged, and although a number of tanks were hit by almost point-blank fire of 88-mms., one finally smashed into the prison gates, all guns firing. The German opposition was rapidly shot to pieces and the main force of Leclerc's division swept on towards the centre of Paris.

Meanwhile, within the city itself, the battle continued. On the morning of Wednesday the 23rd, the Grand Palais was set on fire by German incendiary shells and a spreading cloud of smoke drifted over the centre of Paris. Sporadic shooting could be heard all over the city and, by late afternoon, the fighting rose to a higher crescendo. A fierce battle developed around the FFI-held main Post Office which was attacked by German tanks but, as with previous appearances of German armour, these withdrew without

Above: A German barricade in the Rue de Presbourg, near the Etoile. A German soldier lies dead in the gutter (IWM). Below: Today, just a quiet corner of Paris.

pressing home their advantage. About 5.00 p.m. a Piper Cub, piloted by Jean Callet, braving the anti-aircraft fire, swooped low over the beseiged Police Prefecture to drop a message from Leclerc: It read: *Tenez bon. Nous arrivons*—hold on, we're coming.

Throughout Thursday, the battle continued with both German and French attacks on the strongholds of the other. Tanks patrolled regularly between the German strongpoints through the empty streets, empty that is except for the barricades and the FFI. Slowly the Germans were pushed back into their small enclaves, helped by the capture of the Ceinture, the circular railway connecting all the Paris railway stations which the Germans had been using to transport troops around the city to avoid using the streets.

One of the most resolute FFI attacks on Thursday was at the Prince Eugene barracks. Situated on the north-east side of the Place de la Republique, the whole square had been fortified by the Germans using sandbags and wire. Reinforcements were sent up for the attack by Colonel Rol. By mid-afternoon, the 1200 Germans counter-attacked, emerging from the barracks with two heavy tanks accompanied by half-tracks. Although these cleared the square, the FFI held the Germans at the entry to every street and, by nightfall, the Germans had withdrawn again to the barracks. Lacking heavy weapons, however, the FFI were impotent to press home the attack.

Meanwhile, General Bradley was not impressed by the speed of the 2nd Division advance on Paris. As Bradley later recorded, 'the 2nd Armoured stumbled reluctantly through a Gallic wall, as townsfolk along the line of march slowed the French advance with wine and celebration. Although I could not censure them for responding to this hospitality of their countrymen, neither could I wait for them to dance their way to Paris. If von Choltitz was to deliver the city, we had a compact to fulfil.

'''To hell with prestige'' I finally told my Chief of Staff, ''tell the 4th (U.S. Infantry Division) to slam on in and take the liberation.'' Learning of these orders and fearing an affront to France, Leclerc's troopers mounted their tanks and burned up their treads on the brick roads.'

General Leclerc, realising he could not possibly effect the relief of Paris before the next day, was determined to get at least some men through to give the people new hope. He therefore ordered Captain Raymond Dronne,

Left: An American soldier watches out for sniper-fire as a Red Cross team crosses the Rue du Louvre (IWM). Above: No trace of any bandits in 1976.

a young tank officer: 'Take whatever you have with you and go right into Paris.' He told Dronne not to seek out and fight Germans unless compelled to, but to get right into the heart of the city. 'Then you tell them to hold on, just for this night, and that we will be there in force tomorrow.'

Captain Dronne left at once with three Sherman tanks and sixteen half-tracks of infantry. There was just sufficient glimmer in the summer night to read 'Porte d'Italie' as they roared into the city proper. As they did so, great cheers rang out from vehicle after vehicle as the men realised they had entered Paris at last.

At the clatter of Dronne's tank-tracks, the Parisians who had gathered warily in the Place d'Italie bolted into doorways and buildings. Then, when they saw in the dimness the approaching troops did not appear to be Germans, they were at first non-plussed. But suddenly they realised the helmets were American. 'Les Americains!' a woman's voice shrilled excitedly. The shout was taken up all around and a great crowd surged around the Free French vehicles. When the people saw it was not even Americans, but that it was French, the Free French, Leclerc's French, enthusiasm gave way to near delirium! Men and women and children swarmed upon the soldiers and hugged and kissed them, rapidly enveloping the little column and almost pulling the men down among them.

Sitting high in his jeep, Captain Dronne, somehow with his column on the move again, drove on across the square. A girl waving a tricolour and singing in an absolute ecstasy, epitomising the feelings of all around, sat on the jeep's bonnet. Within a few minutes, and after only once being fired upon, they reached the Hotel de Ville, administrative headquarters of Paris. Dronne rapped a few sharp orders and his men had the huge building surrounded. Inside, the clank of the tanks was heard by Resistance leader George Bidault *(later French Minister of Foreign Affairs)* and his men. Wild with enthusiasm, some singing the Marseillaise, they rushed out to greet the French soldiers.

Over the radio into homes all over Paris there now went out the electrifying cry from the secret transmitter in the Hotel de Ville: 'Rejoice! Rejoice! The Leclerc Division has entered Paris!' This was followed by the Marseillaise and, quite spontaneously, Parisians everywhere flung up their windows and turned up their radios full blast so that the great, glorious anthem swelled out through the city.

No sooner had the last triumphant notes faded than the announcer cried: 'Everybody, tell all the priests to ring their church bells!' And within minutes the bells of Paris, mute in their shame and gloom since 1940, awoke into a great, splendid clangour!

Friday, August 25 dawned bright and cloudless. The remainder of the 2nd Division, camped overnight within sight of Paris, was on the road early. Colonel Billotte's section encountered no resistance and entered via Porte Gentilly, heading directly for the Ile de la Cite. By 8.30 a.m. he was at the Police Prefecture. Colonel Dio's section entered the Porte d'Orleans a little later whilst Lieutenant-Colonel Langlade, passing through the south-western suburbs, headed straight for the Etoile. By 10.00 a.m., the whole division was inside the city.

As the French columns drove deeper towards the heart of Paris, their progress became slower and slower as they were surrounded by the welcoming Parisians. They didn't appreciate that, amid all the rejoicing, there was still fighting to be done as Leclerc's men closed in on the main German strongpoints. Although von Choltitz had decided to save Paris from all-out destruction, nevertheless his strict military code required that he should make a show of the fighting.

One of the main centres of German resistance was the 64-acre site of the Palais de Luxembourg, south of the river. Here 700 SS troopers awaited the approach of Allied armour. Their main strength was centred on tanks of the 5th Sicherungsregiment dug in the gardens of the palace.

Below left: A soldier in Montmartre has an admiring audience as he fires at snipers. Meanwhile, the workman continues to repair the road! (IWM). Below: Acting the fool in Rue Durantin in 1976.

Left: The German HQ at the Hotel Meurice in its heyday. Above: The facade of the hotel after the battle. One of the knocked-out Shermans stands outside No. 226 (IWM). Below: A one-way street in 1976.

The continued fighting forced General Leclerc to move his command post to the Gare Montparnasse, the main railway station in the south of the city, rather than the Hotel Crillon as planned. Well aware that von Choltitz was only likely to surrender to regular forces, Leclerc had deputised a young captain, Jacques Branet, with a force of five Shermans and 200 men under Lieutenant Henri Karcher, to press on to the Hotel Meurice. After a fierce ninety-minute battle in which all five Shermans were put out of action, Karcher reached the hotel entrance and, with three men behind him, sprang into the door of the hotel. Ahead of him Karcher saw a huge portrait of Hitler crowning a showcase of jewels, evening bags, and compacts. It shattered to bits. Karcher's first gesture in the headquarters of the German commander of Gross Paris had been to fire on the Fuehrer. From behind his sandbags on the first landing, a German soldier opened fire on Karcher. The Frenchman ducked behind the reception desk and plucked a black ball from his belt. It was a phosphorus grenade. Biting out its pin, he hurled it into the lobby. Behind Karcher, Pfc. Walter Heremann turned his flamethrower onto the elevator cage.

Through the mass of acrid smoke filling the lobby appeared the figure of a German officer, his hands in the air. Karcher leaped for him, jabbing the snout of his sub-machine gun into his belt. While Heremann translated, Karcher ordered, 'Everybody, one by one, hands up and arms thrown away!' The German yelled a command. The firing stopped, and one by one, covered with blood and sweat, the defenders of the ground floor of the hotel streamed out of the smoke towards Karcher and his three men. Down the stairs, Karcher saw a German officer in the red-striped trousers of the general staff approaching him. Karcher sprang at him. 'Where,' he asked, 'is your general?'

The general was seated behind a long table placed at an angle in a little room just one flight above Karcher. Reaching the first floor, Karcher opened the door to the room in-

Captured German soldiers are marched past a burnt-out car outside the Hotel Crillon on the Place de la Concorde (IWM).

The Hotel Crillon was the building in which France recognised the Independence of the United States in 1776.

dicated by the officer. Choltitz stood up. Karcher came to attention and saluted.

'Lieutenant Henri Karcher of the Army of General de Gaulle,' he announced.

'General von Choltitz, commander of Gross Paris,' answered the German.

Karcher asked Choltitz if he was ready to surrender.

'Ja,' Choltitz replied.

'Then,' Karcher said, 'you are my prisoner'.

Although General Leclerc's HQ was at Montparnasse station, the German commander was taken by car to the Police Prefecture where he was met by Leclerc who prepared a formal document of capitulation. However, Colonel Rol insisted on not only being present at the signing but also being included as leader of the FFI. Whilst concurring on the first point, General Leclerc insisted that until General Koenig arrived, he was the senior commanding officer of all French forces and that his signature would represent all. He signed his own name, followed by von Choltitz. Leclerc then suggested to von Choltitz that teams of French and German officers be sent round to the various strongpoints with written orders for them to surrender and to this the German agreed.

After the signing, von Choltitz was taken in a French half-track to the 2nd Armoured Division HQ at Gare Montparnasse accompanied by Colonel Rol. When they reached the station, the Resistance leader again argued with General Leclerc that his name be included in the surrender document.

By this time General von Choltitz, with his copy of the document in his pocket, was in another room signing the cease-fire orders. Bored now by Rol's obduracy, and to 'shut the man up', Leclerc produced his copy and modified it slightly to take the signature of the Resistance leader. He did not even bother to protest when Rol inserted his name actually above the signature of Leclerc. How could it be of any importance? The surrender document being actively used to bring about the enemy's laying down of arms was the one in the possession of von Choltitz. This bore only the signatures of Leclerc and von Choltitz. But in his innocence of things political, Leclerc was to earn a swift rebuke from de Gaulle. The General arrived from Rambouillet at 4.00 p.m. and became almost apoplectic!

'It is not true!' stormed de Gaulle, jabbing

Above: An FFI French Char B tank just past the Hotel Meurice. The Kriegsmarine looks rather the worse for wear (IWM). Below: No trace of the damage is visible today.

Above: General Dietrich von Choltitz signs surrender orders in Room 32 at Montparnasse station (IWM).

Above: The plaque with the misleading wording, at least a quarter-of-a-mile away from the station, on the wall of C & A's.

Left: This picture has variously been reproduced in the past captioned as the Hotel de Ville or Police Prefecture—naturally leading us on a wild goose chase! (IWM). Above: Proof that it is in the Prince Eugene Barracks, now the Caserne Verines.

a long finger at where Rol's signature appeared to indicate the Communists had been chiefly responsible for the defeat of the Germans in Paris. 'Moreover, in this affair, you are the senior officer and therefore solely responsible.' But, as long as the job had been done Leclerc felt he had played his part and ruefully shrugged off this chiding as 'politics'.

During all this time, fighting was still bitter around the German strongpoints. Part of the force that had attacked the Meurice were sent to the German Kommandantur on the Place de l'Opera where tanks shelled several German vehicles before a white flag appeared.

The Clignancourt barracks was attacked by the FFI without waiting for 2nd Armoured tank support, and this was the only strongpoint to be taken by the Resistance alone. At the Chamber of Deputies, the surrender of the 500-man garrison was negotiated by an American photographer Pfc. Phil Drell when the French interpreter got lost in the milling crowd outside the burning building.

The Ecole Militaire, attacked across the Champ de Mars by seventeen Shermans, was the scene of a ramming when Captain Georges Gaudet, commanding the 4th Squadron of the 12th Cuirassiers, drove straight at an 88-mm gun behind a barricade at the front door. Finally, after a five-hour battle, 250 Germans surrendered.

The fiercest fighting had been going on all day at the Place de la Republique where the Germans had spent the night improving their defences. It was not until mid-afternoon that 2nd Armoured tanks arrived to help the FFI. At about 6.00 p.m., just as an all-out attack on the Prince Eugene Barracks was about to take place, a loudspeaker van arrived. Announcing von Choltitz's surrender, the shooting gradually died out and the Germans defending the building filed out.

Although the last Germans surrendered at the Senate building shortly afterwards, firing could still be heard in various parts of the city. The FFI were taking vengeance—against the dreaded Milice and also against surrendering SS. Germans giving themselves up at the Ecole Militaire were shot down as they emerged from the building and in at least two places, prisoners were fired at from windows. Germans were snatched from the ranks and stabbed or kicked to death, whilst another complete column was mown down with machine guns.

And not only the Germans suffered. Those Frenchmen suspected of collaboration were viciously beaten or killed whilst women had their heads shaved and were herded through the streets bearing placards.

Above: One of the important German strongholds was the Chambre des Deputies, the French Parliament building. Here a German with a white flag approaches a French officer to discuss the surrender (IWM). Below: Now, although the name has changed to Assemblee Nationale, this is the same entrance on the Place du Palais Bourbon.

Victory!

General de Gaulle, who had arrived in Paris at 4.00 p.m. had, as we have seen, gone straight to General Leclerc's HQ. He then returned to his old office at the Ministry of War, leaving about 7.00 p.m. to visit the Police Prefecture. From there he made his way through thick crowds to the Hotel de Ville. After an appearance on the balcony, he returned to quarters provided for him in the Rue de Varenne to plan for his official entry the following day.

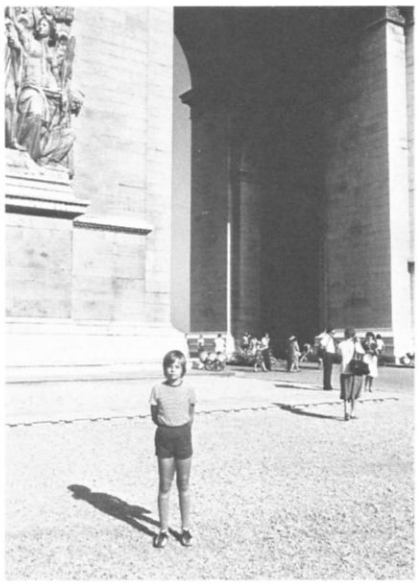
At 3.00 p.m. on Saturday, August 26, the General arrived at the Arc de Triomphe. Responding to advance warning on the radio of his appearance, masses of people had converged on central Paris during the morning. At the Etoile, the 'Regiment of the Tchad' were formally drawn up in front of the arch.

After re-kindling the Eternal Flame on the memorial to the Unknown Soldier, he began his victory march and a million Parisians cheered wildly, from where they packed the roadsides, balconies, windows and roof-tops. Ahead of de Gaulle rumbled four tanks of the 2nd Armoured Division, while police, firemen and men of the FFI moved along with him on either side to keep back the delirious crowds. But this day of destiny for General de Gaulle was not without incident. Shots rang out as he headed the jubilant throng into the Place de la Concorde and thousands fell flat or surged away towards the cover of the tanks surrounding the square. But there was no sign of wavering among the men who marched at the head of the procession, not de Gaulle, not Leclerc, not one of them did anything but stride on with indomitable purpose.

At Notre Dame, whence they drove from the Place de la Concorde, FFI men and soldiers were shooting at unseen and imaginary targets on roof-tops and among the gargoyles of the cathedral itself. Leclerc ordered his officers to stop the wild firing, himself setting the example by knocking down a soldier's rifle with his stick. There were even sounds of shots in the cathedral after de Gaulle, Leclerc and the rest had entered. As many of the congregation cowered there rang out the cry: 'Have you no pride? Stand up!' in the angry tones of General Koenig. The congregation, none of whom had been hit, obeyed and the service proceeded. But shots mysteriously continued and de Gaulle ordered the service to end at the Magnificat. Cool and austere as ever, he then strode from the cathedral.

The following day, Sunday, Generals Eisenhower and Bradley entered Paris and met General de Gaulle at the Prefecture of Police. Although he had already requested that the French 2nd Armoured Division remain in Paris until order was fully restored, de Gaulle asked the Supreme Commander to parade a division or two of American troops through the city as a show of force. De Gaulle was by no means sure of his own position as French leader. Eisenhower turned to Bradley and asked him what could be done. General Bradley felt he could march a division, presently reorganising at Versailles and already earmarked to reinforce the advance north of the Seine, through Paris en route for the front.

And so it came about that the US 28th Division became probably the first troops in history to march on parade through a capital city and to engage in battle the same day. The much photographed parade, showing the GIs filling the avenue des Champs Elysees from kerb to kerb, took place on the afternoon of August 29. 'To the Division's own tune "Khaki Bill",' wrote General Bradley, 'the procession parted into two columns each moving into assembly preparatory to attack.' It was a fitting end to the battle for the liberation of Paris.



Above left: General Pierre Koenig, designated head of the FFI by the Allies, awaits the start of the parade on August 26 (IWM). Above right: August 26—thirty-two years later.

Above: Guarded by jeeps of the 2nd Armoured Division, General de Gaulle strides down the Avenue des Champs Elysees (IWM). Below: This is the same spot; Marie-Louise is still in business although she seems to have prospered over the years.

Left: As the General reached the Notre Dame, shots rang out and Parisians dived for cover (IWM). Above: Casual passers-by on the same corner—the pillar has since been decapitated.

The 28th Division parade through Paris was quickly seized upon by a section of the British press as an attempt by the Americans to seek to take the glory. General Eisenhower had purposely stayed away from Paris that day so as not to give that impression—it was not a victory parade. 'The Americans love a parade' screamed the headlines but General Bradley comments that 'I would never have acceeded to this parade of US forces had de Gaulle not asked for an immediate demonstration force in Paris.'

Thirty-two years later, we were looking forward to our own 'show of force' in Paris as we had timed our visit to coincide with the Military Vehicle Conservation Group 'Liberation of Paris' tour. It was with considerable excitement that we rendezvoused with the contingent in West Quay Road, Southampton. All types of soft-skinned transport were represented by the eighty-odd British and American vehicles including a Dingo armoured car. Other entries were expected to join us en route to Paris and sure enough our Dutch 'Keep 'em Rolling' friends were waiting for us at Le Havre. Additional Allied vehicles from Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy and Luxemburg joined us on the route to Paris.

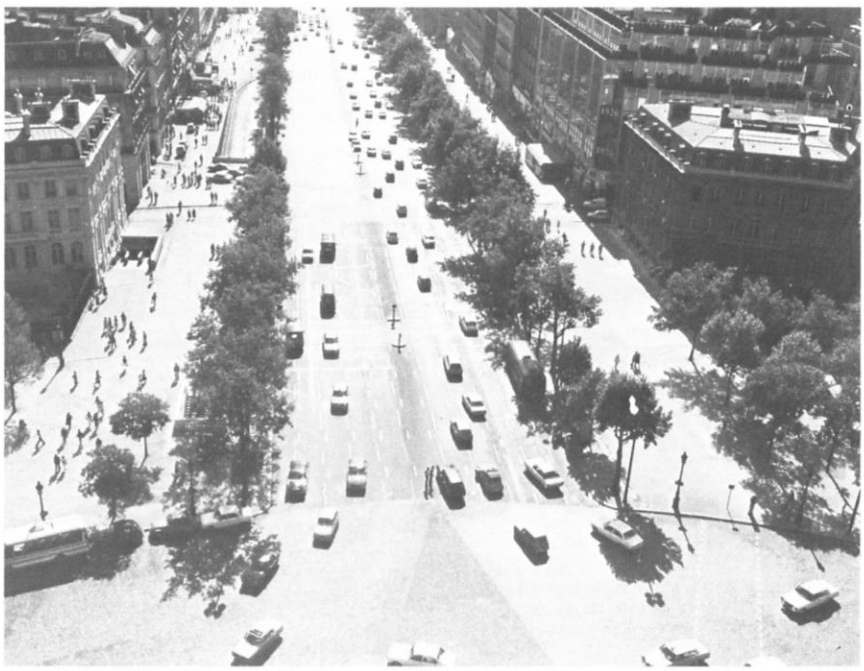
The night before we reached Paris, we viewed the SHAEF war film, edited from six and a half million feet of war footage by Carol Reed and Garson Kanin; the film which tells the story of the Tommy and the GI from Normandy to Berlin and which Ike himself previewed in Paris on March 28, 1945—'The True Glory'.

At noon on the following day, August 25, the anniversary of the liberation, we were parked before the memorial at Mont Valerien, scene of the execution of more than 4000 French men and women. After a brief ceremony, the French 'armour' arrived in the shape of a half-track and M8 Greyhound, impressive additions to the convoy. The parade down the avenue des Champs Elysees was timed for 3.00 p.m. and, although police control of the Paris traffic left a lot to be desired, shortly after the appointed hour, six of our motorcycle MPs led the first vehicles down the broad avenue in the tracks of the original parade thirty-two years earlier.

An incredible amount of organisation had gone into 'Major' Peter Gray's next achievement—a river voyage by our nine DUKWs from a slipway beside the place de la Concorde along the Seine and around the Ile de la Cite. It was hoped to include two amphibious jeeps, but Peter's own vehicle had a slight accident at the last moment and the French seep entered the water alone. With the beautiful architecture of Paris as a backdrop, the ten amphibians made an impressive sight and completed their ninety-minute voyage without mishap—an impressive end to a memorable day.

It is important to remember that the Battle

Above: The march down the Champs Elysees by the US 28th Division on August 29, 1944, believed to be the first time troops have paraded through a city straight into battle (IWM). Below: Paris today is one big battle—with the traffic!



The drivers of vehicles of all nationalities joined in paying tribute to the 4000 French patriots shot here at Mont Valerien.

of Paris really was a battle and the many memorial plaques around the centres of resistance testify to the fierceness of the fighting. Over 2500 Resistance fighters had been killed or wounded with 127 civilian deaths and 714 injured. The 2nd Armoured Division had lost 42 killed and 77 wounded.

On the other hand, Colonel Rol reported on September 8 that the FFI had destroyed or captured a considerable number of vehicles which included 35 tanks, as well as 22 cannons, 32 machine guns and 75 automatic weapons not including rifles and pistols. Together with the Leclerc division, they had killed or wounded 3200 Germans and made nearly 20,000 prisoner. There were at the lowest estimate 4000-plus summary executions of collaborators by the Resistance in France in the weeks following the liberation.

The original American plan to bypass Paris provides an interesting comparison with the similar Russian decision, taken almost at the same time on the Eastern Front, not to capture Warsaw. After the Soviet radio had urged the Warsaw underground to revolt, although their forces were only a few miles from the city, the Russians then made no attempt to enter the city to assist the resistance. Within six weeks the Germans had crushed the Warsaw uprising, the Russians even refusing British offers of airborne supply drops to the underground, surrounded in the city. The resistants' crime, of course, was that they were not Communists. Nevertheless, the Allies were no more eager than the Russians to capture Paris and leave it behind their advancing lines in control of a Communist faction!

In Paris we visited all the major centres of resistance, both French and German. The Prefecture still bears unrepaired spang marks around the main door from the first shell-burst, as does the Ecole Militaire and the Prince Eugene Barracks. This latter building is now renamed Caserne Verines after a French resistance Lieutenant-Colonel shot in Cologne in 1943. One well-known picture showing a courtyard of derelict German vehicles turned out to have been taken at the barracks, in spite of it being captioned in various books as the Police Prefecture, Hotel de Ville and Palais Royal!

We ended our trip to Paris with a visit to the Gare Montparnasse to find office No. 32 adjoining platform 3 where the amended surrender document was signed. It is important here to correct a popular misconception—the pictures taken at the station of von Choltitz captioned 'signing the surrender of Paris' are wrong—all he is doing is signing orders to his strongpoints to cease fire. The real surrender had already been signed in the Police Prefecture. However, when we reached the station, we found this had been entirely rebuilt in 1968-70. A huge new skyscraper, the Tour Montparnasse, occupies the old station forecourt and all trace of the actual room has been lost. The site of this is not marked—the actual plaque recording the 'surrender' at the station is set in the wall of the C & A department store 500 yards away!

This plaque on the wall of the Hotel des Invalides is typical of dozens recording where men died to liberate Paris.

Leader and organiser of the 1976 Military Vehicle Conservation Group tour was 'Major' Peter Gray, seen here on the left taking a turn as a motorcycle MP. In September 1977, the Group plans to visit Arnhem.

POLICE

AFTER THE BATTLE

IT HAPPENED HERE

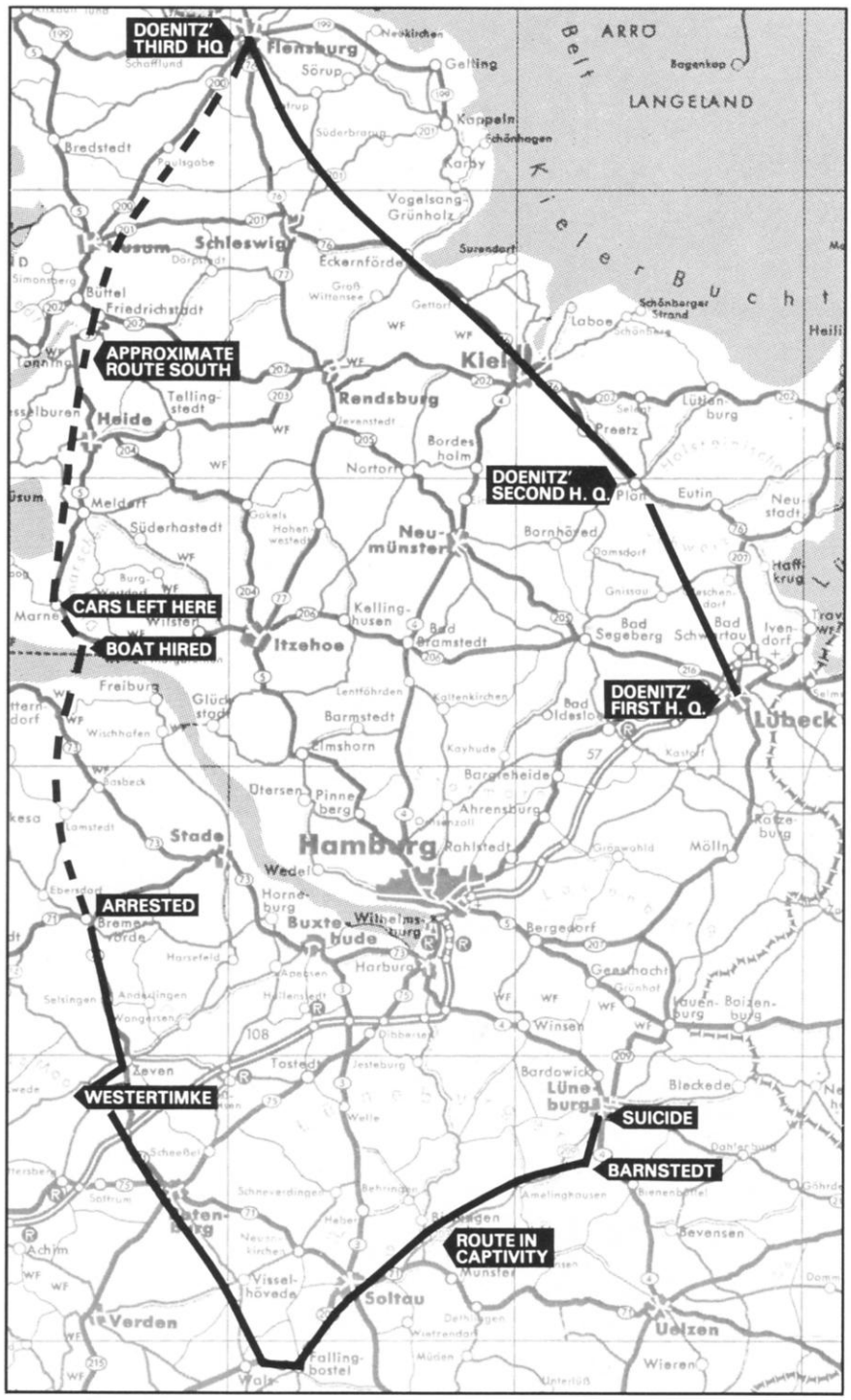
HIMMLER'S SUICIDE

THE BEGINNING OF THE END

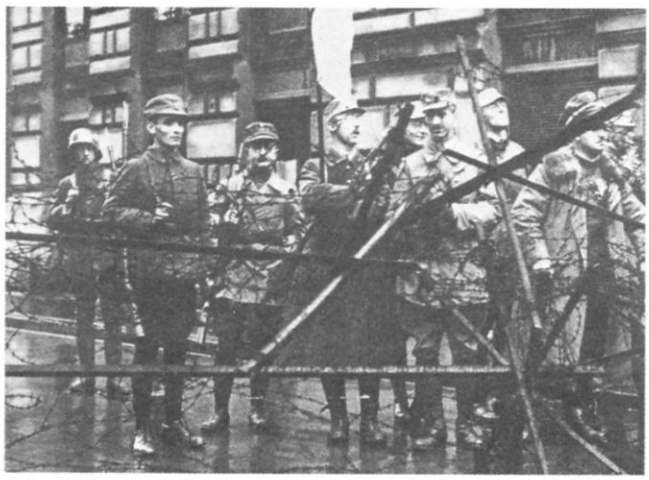
Since the failure of the Bomb Plot, in July 1944, Himmler had been nominal Commander-in-Chief of the Reserve Army, and on April 20, 1945, Hitler's last birthday, he appeared in Berlin to offer his birthday greetings to the Fuehrer.

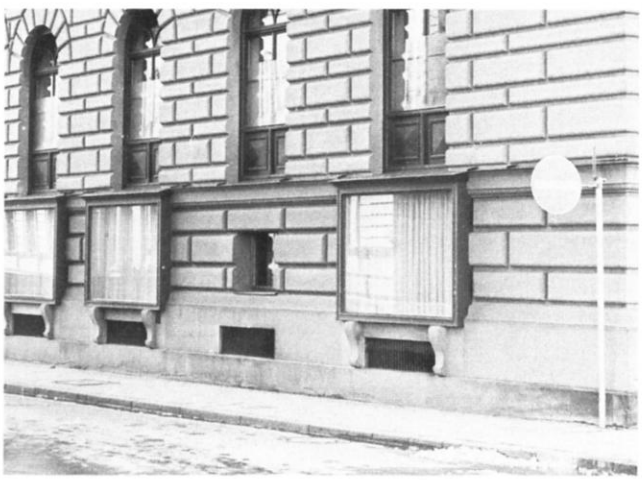
Himmler, 'der treue Heinrich' as Hitler once called him, had been a close supporter of Hitler since the earliest days of the Nazi party. In 1929, at the age of 29, he had become head of the SS, Hitler's elite bodyguard. By 1936, Himmler had become Chief of the German Police, a role which was doubled by the fact that he was Reichsminister of the Interior. He therefore had at his command the complete civil police network, basically the ORPO, SCHUPO and GENDARMERIE. From 1939, he had organized the RSHA (State Security HQ) which directed the SS security (SD), the GESTAPO (political), KRIPO (criminal) and SIPO (security) police forces as well as the parallel civilian police HQ (Hauptamt ORPO). Himmler, as Reichsfuehrer SS, was also the head of the civilian network of the Allgemeine or General SS.

He was also head of the SS-Totenkopfverbaende — the Death's Head concentration camp guards — and the SS-WVHA — Economic Administrative Main Office (as it was known from 1942) — which not only operated the largest mass-murder system known to history, but ran a highly profitable business through the exploitation of forced labour and the proceeds of seized funds, property and assets including even the sale of the remains of victims (gold teeth and bonemeal, etc.). He was responsible, likewise, for



Below: Himmler, holding the old Kaiser Battle Flag, behind the barricade outside the War Ministry in Munich during the 'putsch' on November 9, 1923. Below right: The entrance to Schoenfeld Strasse today.





the organisation, administration and operations of the Einsatzgruppen and anti-partisan brigades in Russia and Poland.

As Reichsfuehrer SS, Himmler also expanded the military element of the SS — originally known as the Verfuegungstruppe — which in 1940 was named the Waffen-SS, or Armed SS, into an Army which by 1945 totalled some 900,000 men, a mixture of about 50 per cent Germans, the rest being a combination of ethnic Germans and nationals from all parts of Europe. In addition to all these offices, he had also just been Commander-in-Chief of the Army Group Rhine (from December 10, 1944) and then Army Group Vistula (January 23 to March 20, 1945). Since then he had resided at Hohenlychen, 100 km north of Berlin, in the private nursing home of his medical adviser, Professor Gebhardt. It was from here, advised by SS-General Walter Schellenberg and encouraged by his masseur, Felix Kersten, that he commenced secret 'peace' negotiations with Count Folke Bernadotte, Deputy Chief of the Swedish Red Cross. While the latter was primarily interested in obtaining concessions for Scandinavians in concentration camps — in which he succeeded — the former naively believed that he would be recognized by the West as Head of State and could negotiate a separate peace.

On April 22, 1945, Hitler decided to stay in Berlin. Next day — still based on Hohenlychen — Himmler met Bernadotte in Luebeck and made more offers. After hanging around for a while, Himmler and his cronies, with some of his escort battalion, moved to Schwerin, 100 km east of Hamburg, on May 26. Here, he would be near the HQ of Grand Admiral Karl Doenitz, Commander-in-Chief of the Navy and the most powerful man in north-west Germany at the time.

Meanwhile the Himmler/Bernadotte peace negotiations, behind Hitler's back, had become more widely known and, on the 28th, the gist was purposely broadcast via the BBC, the news being heard — either directly or indirectly — by Bernadotte, Doenitz and Hitler. Himmler was entirely discredited and the latter, in a rage, deprived him of all offices and ordered his arrest — a fate recently suffered by Hermann Goering.

On April 29th, the new Luftwaffe Commander-in-Chief, General Ritter von Greim, flew into Rechlin from embattled Berlin and moved to Ploen, where Doenitz had meanwhile set up his HQ, and handed over the arrest order for Himmler. He found that the Admiral, who personally disliked Himmler, was nevertheless very wary of him and having no power over him had formed his own navy bodyguard (of keen U-boat sailors under the popular U-boat captain Commander Cremer) for self-protection.

On the 30th, after just having had a non-commital talk in Luebeck with Himmler, Doenitz heard by radio that he had, himself, unexpectedly been appointed Head of State as successor to Hitler, who had committed suicide that afternoon. He immediately summoned Himmler and told him in a private talk that night, that he could not join the new government.

However, Himmler continued to hang around Doenitz' HQ at Ploen which later moved to Flensburg, and even appointed SS-General Hans Pruetzmann as an unwanted SS Liaison Officer to the hard-pressed admiral. Pruetzmann and SD sleuths managed to discover that Doenitz had received confirmation of Himmler's dismissal from Berlin.

Doenitz, who was embarrassed by the presence of these unwanted Nazis, had no intention of having anything to do with Himmler and in the final of several meetings told him so clearly: 'Anybody who is a traitor once, is ready to betray a second time'.

On May 6, 1945, Doenitz personally handed Himmler a written dismissal from his former offices as Minister of the Interior, Commander-in-Chief of the Reserve Army and Chief of Police. It included the sentence: 'What I recommend you to do is to drive straight to Montgomery's HQ and say that you are Heinrich Himmler and that you want to take full responsibility for everything the SS has done'.

Nevertheless, Himmler decided to go south to Bavaria, his home, taking with him a few escorts from these latter days. These were:

SS-Brigadefuehrer Professor Dr. Karl Brandt, Reichskommisar for Health and the Medical Services: Head of the Waffen-SS Medical Branch and Hitler's personal medical adviser *(wanted for criminal medical experiments, he was later executed by the Allies).*

SS-Obergruppenfuehrer und Generalleutnant der Waffen-SS Professor Dr. Karl Gebhardt, Chief SS surgeon and Himmler's personal medical adviser *(wanted for criminal medical experiments and, like Brandt, later executed by the Allies).*

SS-Brigadefuehrer und Generalmajor der Polizei Otto Ohlendorf, Chief of Department III in the Reich Security Main Office (RSHA) *(also wanted for crimes, in this case as head of an Einsatzgruppe, and also executed by the Allies).*

SS-Sturmbannfuehrer Josef Kiermayer, Personal Aide and Secretary to Himmler, together with one more aide.

SS-Obersturmbannfuehrer und Oberstleutnant der Waffen-SS Werner Grothmann, 29, and **SS-Sturmbannfuehrer und Major der Waffen-SS Macher,** 24, two military officers, with seven NCOs of Himmler's personal staff and/or of the Waffen-SS Escort Battalion.

This unwieldy and ill-assorted group removed the insignia from their uniforms and assumed the role, supported by false documents, of recently released Secret Military Police (the GFP or Geheime Feld-Polizei) which since early 1944 had come under the control of RSHA and was therefore SD directed. Therefore, although they didn't realise it, they were, even as minor NCOs, as much on the Allied Wanted List in the 'Immediate Arrest Category' as before. Himmler, for example, had documents purporting to show that he was 'Ex-Sergeant Heinrich Hitzinger of a Special Armoured Company, attached to the Secret Field Police, demobbed May 3, 1945'.

Leaving other SS personalities to fend for themselves, the SS party left Flensburg on May 10 and drove in easy stages across country. On the 12th, they abandoned their four large cars in the small town of Marne in Holstein and proceeded on foot to the north bank of the Elbe estuary. At this stage they fitted into the local scenery as the area between the Kiel Canal and the Danish frontier was packed with German troops, largely self-administered.

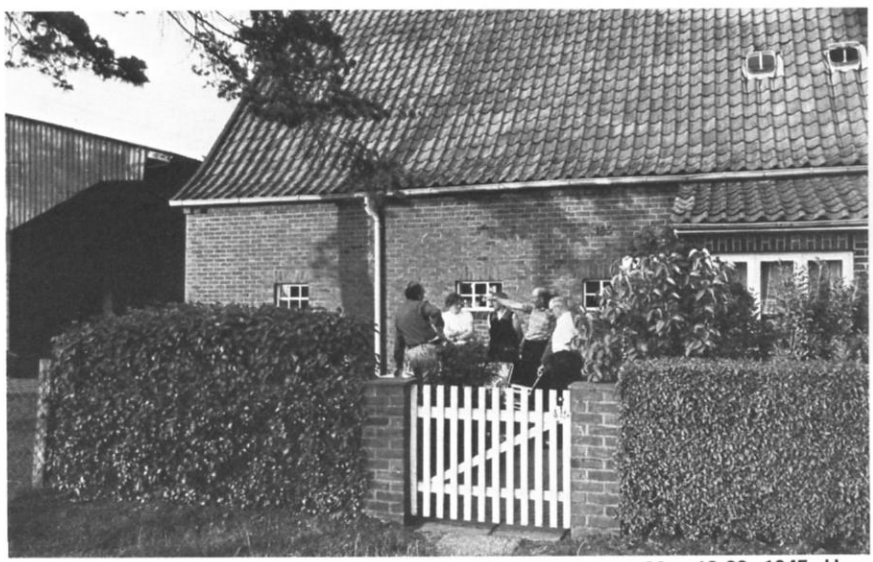
Later that day, a fisherman was located who for the sum of 500 Reichsmarks (then worth a doubtful £25 or so), ferried them across the Elbe to the small town of Neuhaus on the River Oste.

For the next few days, Himmler's group moved southwards, on foot, through the centre of the peninsula formed in the north and east by the Elbe and in the west by the North Sea and the river Weser. There was no hurry as it was deemed necessary to adjust to the situation. Again, ideally, the area was teeming with German troops of all services and arms, self-administered under British supervision as the 'Korps Ems'. These soldiers were camping in the open and housed in barns, so that fifteen more in shabby, unmarked uniforms were not in any way obvious. Himmler, wearing a civilian jacket, had shaved off his moustache, removed his pince-nez and donned an eye-patch over his left eye.

Approaching the southern limits of the Korps Ems area, by May 18, the group was in the western suburb of the small town of Bremervoerde, in the centre of the peninsula. It could have gone on across country but, unaccountably, decided to cross the British-guarded river Oste bridge on the east of the town.

The group housed itself in the farmhouse of Herr Dankers at 165 Waldstrasse. His son Heinrich, although only nine at the time, still remembers the 'odd' tensions between the persons, some clearly allocated as 'guards'. He recollects the protective manner in which these snatched away the shaving water his mother was innocently taking to the more important one.

While based there, Josef Kiermayer set out to investigate the bridge situation. Twice he demanded passes from the local Landrat, Herr Dohrmann, the British-installed District Councillor. Twice Herr Dohrmann *(a master confectioner now deceased)* refused; later he commented that these people could have easily forded the river upstream of the town.



Waldstrasse 165 at Bremervoerde where Himmler stayed from May 18-22, 1945. Herr Dankers points out the way Himmler would have left to reach the Oste river bridge.

Returning to the farmhouse, Josef Kiermayer reported the results of his recce and it was decided that the bulk of the group should try to get through the British check-point by showing demob passes and pretending to be sick. They were to masquerade as demobbed policemen en route to Munich supervised by a doctor, this being Dr. Gebhardt who spoke English.

At about 3.00 p.m. on May 20, SS-Sturmbannfuehrer Kiermayer and Dr. Gebhardt set off towards the check-point with the intention of coming back for the others if all were well. At about 4.00 p.m. they were stopped at the bridge and duly taken to Sergeant Ken Baisbrown, Intelligence Corps, who was on duty in Wilhelm Lohse's Mill.

This mill *(now a storehouse for SPAR)* is located between two bridges, south of the inland harbour. At that time, the western bridge was damaged but passable, while the eastern bridge, over the river Oste, had been blown-up and replaced by a Bailey bridge. This was guarded by Scottish Infantry of 51 (Highland) Division and constituted the check-point at map square 9344. The real reason for its existence was that it was an intelligence and security screening point of 45 Field Security Section, Intelligence Corps, the executive unit of HQ 30 Corps, then nearby at Zeven. It was manned, and had been since May 8, by Staff-Sergeant John Hogg and his few NCOs of 1003 Field Security Reserve Detachment, which had an office and accommodation nearby in the main street. They were assisted by Sergeants Arthur Britton and Ken Baisbrown of 45 FSS, who were intelligence operators and linguists. They had, as back-up, not only the Allied Intelligence network, but the CROWCASS wanted list of SD, GESTAPO, SS and war criminals in the 'Immediate Arrest Categories,' but no photos for comparison.

Care was taken to give the impression all was well and Dr. Gebhardt, (who claimed he was in charge of a group of sick personnel), together with Josef Kiermayer, were sent back with two 3-ton lorries and a British escort to bring in the rest of their party.

Meanwhile Ken Baisbrown quickly walked down the short distance to John Hogg's office to inform him about these two suspicious detainees who admitted to being demobbed members of the GFP Secret Field Police, in itself a reason for automatic arrest.

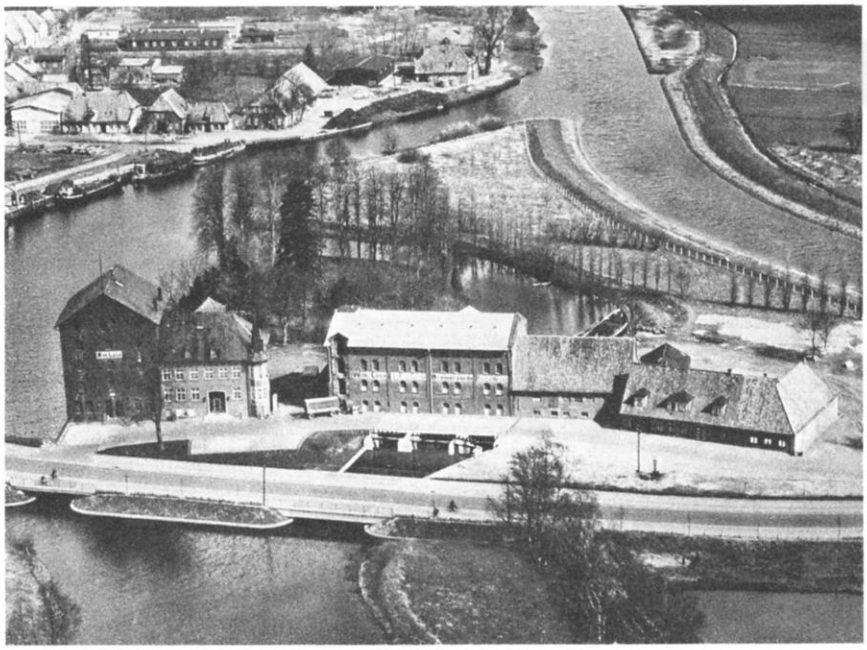
Ken Baisbrown returned to the mill to prepare a reception committee for Dr. Gebhardt who returned with ten more of his group. Himmler and his two escorts were not among them, having gone to ground.

Ken Baisbrown *(now an assistant headmaster in Havant, Hampshire)* recollects that initially some members of the group denied belonging together, while Dr. Gebhardt claimed that they were all in his care. All carried release documents dated after May 1, 1945 and, during close examination of these, the keen eyes of Arthur Britton detected that, although carefully smudged, they all bore the tell-tale GFP stamp.

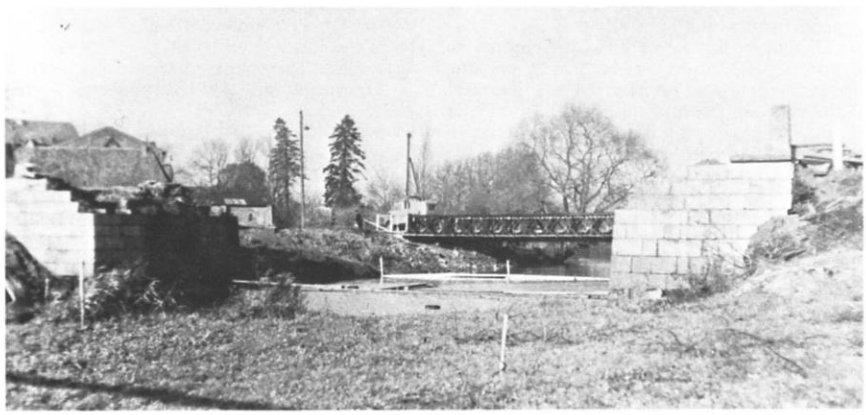
The members of the group were carefully segregated and Arthur Britton, in the company of Ken Baisbrown, gave the youngest a grilling; he soon admitted that it was an SD HQ stamp and that all were indeed together and belonged to the GFP (although he claimed he himself worked there in a menial capacity only).

At about 6.00 p.m. the twelve Germans were duly arrested and shipped off in lorries to the Civil Internment Camp at Westertimke, west of Zeven. Before they departed, several expressed concern about three sick comrades who had been left behind. John Hogg took Dr. Gebhardt back to the farm but found no trace of them and returned to the mill.

Nevertheless, the intelligence personnel were alerted to the fact that three more of these SD-sponsored GFP people were in the offing and warned sentries to be on the look-



Above: Wilhelm Lohse's mill is located on an island site between two branches of the Oste river. Staff-Sergeant Hogg's office was in the left-hand building. Himmler spent the night on the first floor.



Above: The Bailey Bridge over the eastern branch of the river (or right-hand in the photo at the top of the page). The mill is on the left. Below: The view from the rebuilt bridge today showing the new road.

Above: The main street through Bremervoerde, along which Himmler walked in the company of his escorts, Grothmann and Macher, to the mill . . . and captivity.

out. Ken Baisbrown does not recollect the names — bogus or otherwise — of the first twelve, except Kiermayer and Gebhardt, but it was not the duty of this outpost to do so, but to pass on the suspects for interrogation.

The extraordinary behaviour of drawing attention to the whereabouts of Himmler and his two escorts can only be explained by (1) the belief that they were safely across the river or that (2) they were so loyal that they did not want to leave him behind.

THE END

Realizing that the others had passed through the check-point (their arrest could not have been known), Himmler and his two escorts, Grothmann and Macher, hid up for a further twenty-four hours before having a try. Doubtless, Himmler still entertained misconceived hopes of being in some way acceptable to the Allies.

On May 22, walking through the town along the long straight east-west road, with the two military escort officers, one limping in front, Himmler can hardly have realized how bizarre he looked. They were clearly military men, wearing long rubberised motorcyclists' overcoats, while he was wearing an odd collection of civilian garments with a blue raincoat on top. To make matters worse, the two officers glanced back, from time to time, to ensure that their charge was still there. This odd trio walked into the trap set for the three further GFP men and they did not even reach the bridge before being stopped by a roving patrol and escorted to the guardroom at the mill. Here the strange three were received by Arthur Britton *(now managing director of a company in Brussels, Belgium)* at about 5.00 p.m. He telephoned John Hogg reporting that 'the three have come in'.

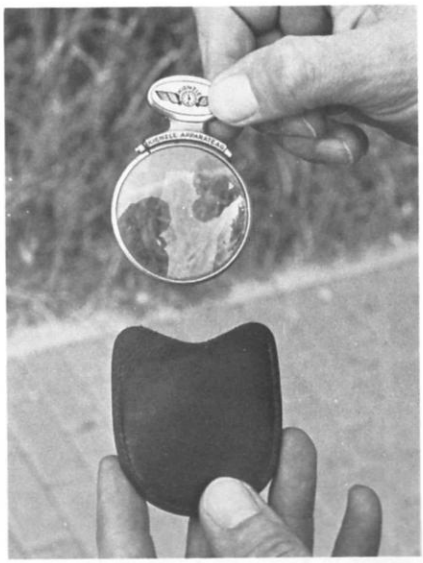
Ken Baisbrown immediately went along to the mill where he saw the three suspects — the two military ones standing and the third, looking sad, sitting on the floor. One of the former said, indicating the latter: 'He has a bad stomach', so Ken Baisbrown, being a humanitarian, instructed the guard commander to give the man a mug of tea. So — all unsuspecting — Himmler, the dread of Europe, was received by the British Army with the traditional British beverage!

All three presented phoney demob documents similar to those of the first twelve suspects — these three were allegedly all ex-Sergeants. The tell-tale, smudged SD stamp was again in evidence and, about 7.00 p.m., the three were informed that they were under arrest. Corporal Richard Forrest searched their belongings and they were then placed under special guard on the first floor, whereupon Arthur Britton telephoned John Hogg from the downstairs office.

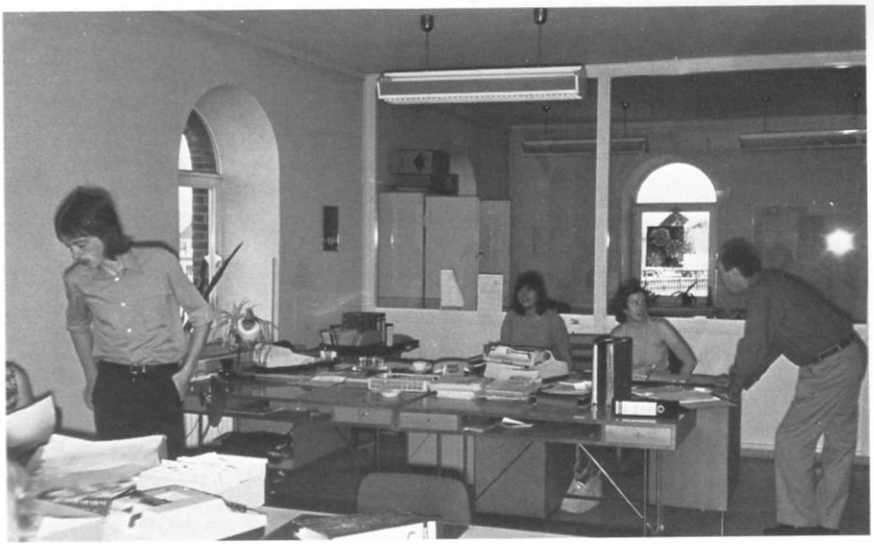
John Hogg signed the Arrest Report, which was witnessed by Arthur Britton in the presence of Ken Baisbrown, a quiet scene which marked the arrest of the greatest mass murderer in human history. Unfortunately, those responsible did not recognise him, thinking only that here were leading wanted men. They did not hear the true identities until two days later.

'Sergeant Hitzinger' and his two escorts spent the night sleeping on or beside the grain in the corner room on the first floor of the mill. *This was later to be the office of the manager, Herr Georg Eggers, who kindly supplied an air-photo of the building.*

Above: Photographing the front door of the mill, once occupied by 1003 Field Security Detachment—note how the old Wilhelm Lohse sign has been painted out.



Above: Himmler's magnifying glass, taken from him at the mill and given to the town photographer, now held by the local museum.



Above: The first floor room where Himmler spent the night; the grain store was converted into an office ten years ago.

Civilian Internment - WESTERTIMKE.

ARREST REPORT.

SURNAME HITZINGER FIRST NAME(s) Heinrich.
ALIAS -
NATIONALITY CLAIMED German.
ADDRESS OF LAST RESIDENCE Flensburg.

OCCUPATION Feldwebel, Pz Kp z.b.V, detached to GFP (SD).
IDENTITY DOCUMENTS Entlassungsschein dated 3/5/45.

DETAILS OF ARREST: (a) PLACE BRUNSVORDE Bridge Control (9344).
(b) DATE 22/5/45. (c) TIME 1700 hrs.
UNIT MAKING ARREST 1003 FSRD.
REASON FOR ARREST See attached report, also occupation as stated above.
(further details to be written on back if necessary)
WITNESSES: NAMES AND ADDRESSES
Sgt Britton 45 FSS.
STATEMENT AFTER ARREST -
(attach on separate sheet if necessary)

PROPERTY: (Property taken from prisoner to be listed on back, together with description and whereabouts of any other property relevant to the case.)
MILITARY OR CIVIL AUTHORITY TAKING CUSTODY OF THE PRISONER
WESTERTIMKE Cage.
Signature of person authorising arrest
Date 22/5/45.

22 MAY 1945

Above: The Arrest Report for 'Heinrich Hitzinger' (incorrectly typed without the 't') signed by John Hogg giving his destination as Westertimke Cage.

Above: Allied Naval prisoners crowd the wire at Marlag und Milag Nord POW Camp at Westertimke, after its capture by Scots Guards on April 27, 1945 (IWM). The guests were quickly changed and it became a Civil Internment Camp for German prisoners: Below: Largely rebuilt—now a Bundeswehr barracks.

At about 7.00 a.m. next morning, the three GFP suspects were duly driven in a 15 cwt truck by Arthur Britton and two guards to the Civil Internment Camp (CIC) at Westertimke in the wake of the others, a journey of some 30 km. for initial processing. En route, a stop was made at Zeven to report the arrest of three suspect SD men to Captain Excell at 45 Field Security Section HQ. Sergeant Britton was told to continue to Westertimke cage for registration.

The trio spent the greater part of the day — Wednesday May 23, 1945 — being moved about by British Army transport. During the afternoon, a trip was made *(probably via Fallingbostel on Lueneburg Heath)* to 031 Civil Interrogation Camp which had just moved to Kolkhagen Camp on the western side of the village of Barnstedt, south of Lueneburg. At 6.30 p.m. on May 23, 1945, 'Sergeant Hitzinger' and his escorts were booked into 031 CIC Barnstedt.

At this time ex-Gauleiter of Hamburg, Karl Kaufmann, a more moderate Nazi, was watching new arrivals from the inner compound of Kolkhagen Camp. He noted an odd figure in military boots and breeches and a civilian jacket and saw him go behind a bush, remove an eyepatch, and reappear putting on glasses — he was immediately recognizable as Himmler, whom Kaufmann had met. This must have been the moment when Himmler decided to admit his identity.

At about 7.00 p.m., the camp commandant, Captain Thomas Selvester, was informed that three prisoners were insisting on seeing him, in itself an unusual request. Himmler had presumably re-disguised himself for effect, for when he appeared before the camp commandant, he was again wearing the eyepatch.

Captain Selvester thus described the scene: 'The first man to enter my office was small, ill-looking and shabbily dressed, but he was immediately followed by two other men, both of whom were tall and soldierly-looking, one slim, and one well-built. The well-built man walked with a limp. I sensed something unusual, and ordered one of my sergeants to place the two men in close custody, and not to allow anyone to speak to them without my authority.' *(These were, of course, Grothmann and Macher, whose photo was taken, next day, outside the reception block of Kolkhagen Camp.)* 'They were then removed from my office, whereupon the small man, who was wearing a patch over his left eye, removed the patch and put on a pair of spectacles. His identity was at once obvious, and he said "Heinrich Himmler" in a very quiet voice.'

Captain Selvester immediately informed HQ British Second Army at Lueneburg and Major Rice, an Intelligence staff officer, arrived at 7.30 p.m. to confirm Himmler's identity. The German was asked to sign his name and this was compared with a signature Major Rice had brought with him. The next step was a body search.

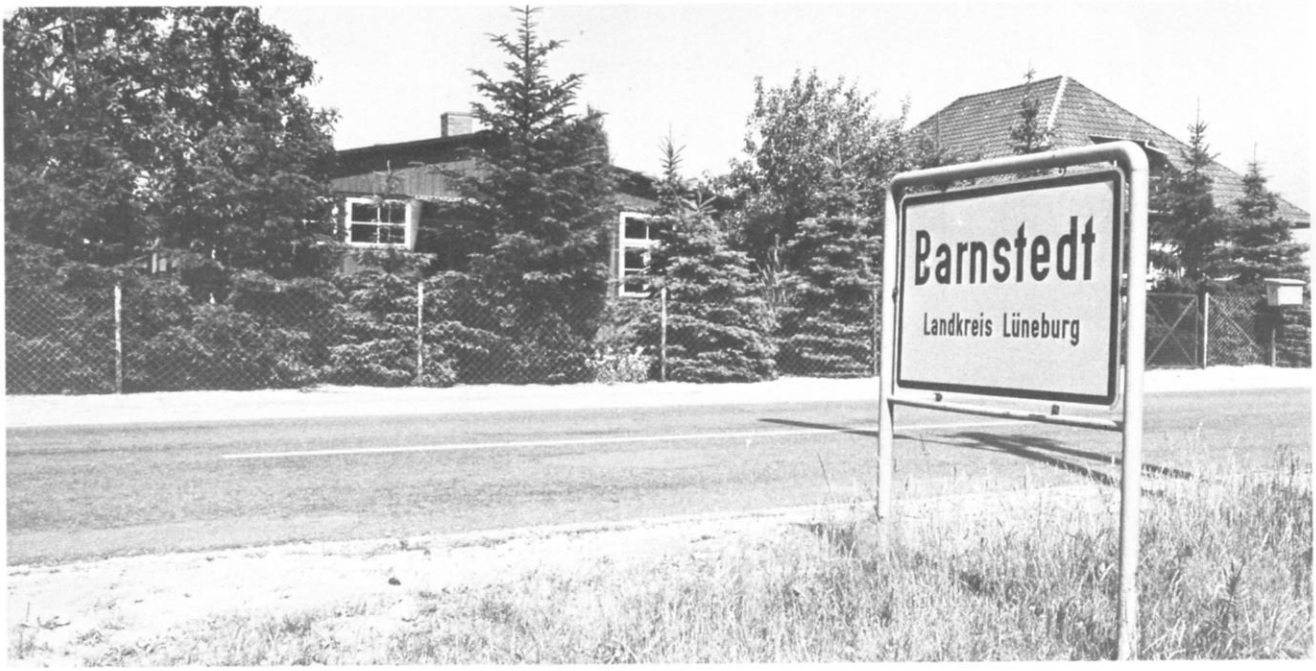
'This I carried out personally,' said Captain Selvester, 'handing each item of clothing as it was removed to my sergeant, who re-examined it. In his jacket I found a small brass case, similar to a cartridge case, which contained a small glass phial. I recognized it for what it was, but asked Himmler what it contained, and he said, "That is my medicine. It cures stomach cramp." I also found a similar brass case, but without the phial, and came to the conclusion that the phial was hidden somewhere on the prisoner's person. When all Himmler's clothing had been removed and searched, all the orifices of his body were searched, also his hair combed and any likely hiding place examined, but no trace of the phial was found. At this stage he was not asked to open his mouth, as I considered that if the phial was hidden in his mouth and we tried to remove it, it might precipitate some action that would be regretted. I did however send for thick bread and cheese sandwiches and tea, which I offered to Himmler, hoping that I would see if he removed anything from his mouth. I watched him closely, whilst he was eating, but did not notice anything unusual.'

The brass case and phial of cyanide found on Himmler by Captain Selvester.

Meanwhile, steps were being taken to receive Himmler at HQ Second Army in the house reserved for such prisoners at 31a Uelzener Strasse, Lueneburg. This was one of several villas and semi-detached houses on both sides of Route 4, the road south towards Uelzen, taken over by British personnel.

At 9.45 p.m., Colonel Michael Murphy, Chief of Intelligence of the Second British Army, arrived at Kolkhagen Camp to take charge of the prisoner. Himmler was again stripped and subjected to a body search but the missing capsule was not found. Colonel Murphy, in an interview in the 1960's, recorded that:

'It was clear to me that it was still possible for Himmler to have poison hidden about him, the most obvious places being his mouth



The Camp at Barnstedt; originally a German Arbeitsdienst Lager. After its capture, it became Civilian Internment Camp 031. Our photo shows the Intake hut, now used as a private dwelling.

and his buttocks. I therefore told him to dress, and wishing to have a medical search conducted, telephoned my second-in-command at my headquarters and told him to get a doctor to stand by at a house I had had prepared for such men as Himmler.'

In fact, he was dressed only in a shirt, underpants and socks — the rest of his uniform was taken from him. He was offered a British battledress in exchange, but refused, so was handed a British Army blanket to wrap around himself. At 10.40 p.m. Himmler was bundled into the back seat of Colonel Murphy's car next to his assistant, Bernard Stapleton. A rather humorous incident occurred on the seven-mile drive to Lueneburg. At one point, Colonel Murphy was not sure of the road and he turned to Stapleton to inquire. To their amusement, Himmler replied, 'You are on the road to Lueneburg!'

The exact events which then occurred have been described by several authors, none of which bear each other out exactly. The earliest account was given at 9.00 p.m. the following day in the BBC broadcast by Chester Wilmott direct from Lueneburg.

Unfortunately Colonel Murphy is now dead and we traced his No. 2, Lieutenant J. P. Ashworth, just a month after his death in September 1975. Brigadier W. Williams, Chief of Intelligence, 21 Army Group, although not there himself, said he believed his No. 2, Lieutenant-Colonel Joe Ewart, was there . . . but that he was now dead.

The deaths of all those who would have known the true facts increased our efforts to track down the doctor. We traced Dr. Wells in August 1975 only to learn he was dying in hospital. It was not possible to talk with him and he died a few days later on August 15. His family, however, kindly provided the editor with a copy of his own notes on the affair, never previously published.

More important was the incredible stroke of luck when the editor bumped into Bill Tate, a corporal in the Defence Company of the Second Army HQ in Lueneburg, the unit responsible for accommodating captured VIPs. He put us on the track of his old CO, Major Norman Whittaker. To our dismay we discovered that he had died on September 1, 1958. However, after a long search, we managed to trace his son Ian and it is with his kind permission that we can now read the first and only authoritive account describing exactly what happened to Himmler which his father recorded in his personal diary.

Earlier that evening, the tannoy at Second Army HQ had urgently broadcast a message for its Medical Officer, Captain (Dr.) C. J. Wells, to report urgently to the Uelzener Strasse Intelligence HQ. The call had been put out by Major Whittaker, who had requisitioned No. 31a on May 14 for the

Himmler's escorts Grothmann and Macher, photographed at Barnstedt the day after the suicide, by Sergeant Chitham (IWM).

John H-F, to whom we are indebted for major research on this story, stands in for the SS men by the Intake hut, June 30, 1976.

The interrogation of a suspected war criminal in the front room of No. 31a Uelzener Strasse as depicted by the Illustrated London News war artist Captain Bryan de Grineau. When Himmler was examined in this room, the only people present were Colonel Murphy, Major Whittaker, Dr. Wells and Sergeant-Major Austin. Major K. Randall and Major S. Rice were outside in the hall.

express purpose of interrogating high-ranking German prisoners. Lieutenant Jack Ashworth had telephoned him at 9.00 p.m. and warned him that Himmler would be his guest for the night. When Dr. Wells arrived, Major Whittaker discussed with him all the likely places where Himmler might be concealing poison. He wanted to take no chances. Already another German, SS-Obergruppenfuehrer Hans Pruetzmann (chief organiser of the Werwolf movement) who he had held at 31a overnight on May 15, had committed suicide after he had left his charge by swallowing poison concealed in a cigarette lighter. Meanwhile, his Company Sergeant-Major Edwin Austin was waiting for Himmler to arrive and, at 10.45 p.m., a pathetic figure was brought into the front room of 31a.

'There was no arrogance about him,' recorded Major Whittaker later in his diary, 'he was a cringing figure who knew the game was up. We made him wash his hands in case he had poison underneath his nails. Then Dr. Wells began his search.'

'I was polite and gentle,' wrote Dr. Wells in his own account, 'he was quiet and co-operative. I examined his heart and chest and the webs of his hands and feet with exaggerated care. I noticed that his finger nails were cut to a point which in a man I had always coupled, probably quite wrongly, with a sex perversion. His hands were small and sensitive. I examined his axilla, between his buttocks, his nostrils, his external auditory meatus and each time I shook my head dismally. Last I came to his mouth and I asked him casually to open it.

'In doing this he threw his head a little backwards and away, but only in the same way that many other people do when asked to show their teeth. There was nothing exaggerated in the movement. They were goodish teeth with a certain number of gold fillings and some small round amalgam ones in the fissures of his molars, the cusps of which were rather unduly flattened I thought, but I may have been wrong. But what I did see was a small blue tit-like object sticking out of the lower sulcus of his left cheek. That was something abnormal. That more than likely was it. What on earth was I going to do now?

No. 31a Uelzener Strasse, the Second Army interrogation headquarters in Lueneburg. Himmler committed suicide in the octagonal-shaped, downstairs front room. Today the house is used as an old people's home.

The scene pictured by Sergeant Carl Sutton of the AFPU less than five minutes after the frantic attempts to keep the SS Chief alive. Sergeant Sutton then propped Himmler up to take this picture. Note the bowl of water used to wash out his mouth.

Company Sergeant-Major Edwin Austin.

The real question, and I realised it, was not what I had seen — but whether Himmler knew what I had seen? Had my face given me away? He must have been watching me carefully. Did he feel the object slip into view as he opened his mouth?'

Major Whittaker recorded that at this stage he was shining the standard lamp into Himmler's face to give the doctor more light. 'Without waiting,' continued Dr. Wells, 'I slipped my finger into the sulcus to sweep out what I had seen. Himmler, who had been watching me acutely, saw what was happening and immediately clamped down on my finger. We struggled for a moment. He wrenched my hand out of his mouth . . . swung his head away and then with an almost deliberate disdain faced me, crushed the glass capsule between his teeth and took a deep inhalation.

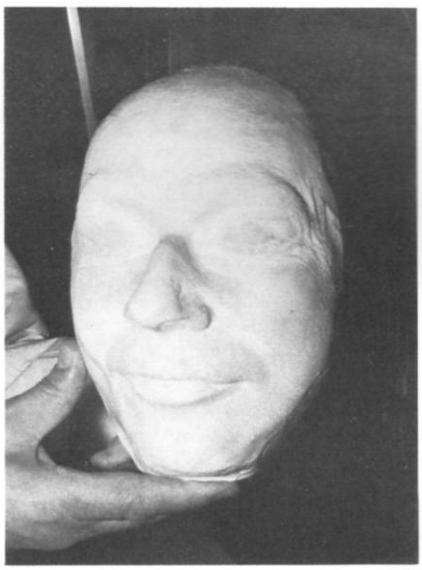
'His face became immediately deeply suffused and contorted with pain. His vena cavo stood out; his eyes stared glassily, his head fell forward, and he crashed to the ground.' Major Whittaker records that the doctor shouted, 'My God! It is in his mouth — he has done it on me.'

'I smelled cyanide,' confided Major Whittaker in his diary, 'and knew that it must be a very strong dose. We immediately upended the old bastard and got his mouth into the bowl of water which was there to wash the poison out. There were terrible groans and grunts coming from the swine. Colonel Murphy and I were taking it in turns to get hold of his tongue. All this time, the doc was working on artificial respiration and calling for cardiac stimulants which Keith was vainly trying to get by telephone to Rear HQ, but the telephone wouldn't function. So I sent Mac down to Rear HQ. (Afterwards Mac told me that he appeared in a very dishevelled state at a doctor's party and when he gasped "Must have cardiac stimulant" they thought it was a huge joke and said, "Come and have a drink, old man!").

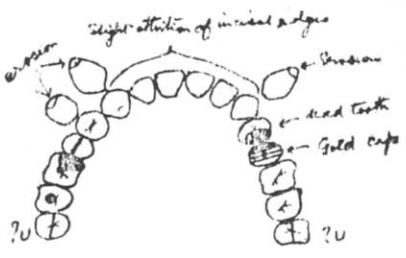
'We had now procured a needle and cotton to fix his tongue, but the first thing we did was to get the needle through his lip so we had to get it out. Finally we got his tongue fixed, but it was a losing battle and this evil thing breathed its last at 2314. The Brig. A/Q and BGS (Brigadier Williams) came to the office and we told them about the suicide. They didn't seem unduly disturbed and had a drink. When they had gone, Jimmy the dentist badly wanted to take a couple of teeth out as souvenirs but I said no.'

The next day, Sergeant Carl Sutton photographed the body, both lying and propped up, after first covering the lower parts with a blanket. The scene was also recorded on cine film by Sergeant McCandle and Ken Gordon of Pathe. A message had been sent to Headquarters at Flensburg requesting the control party there to send representatives from the United States and Russian armies to view the body. Colonel Murphy says the Russians grudgingly agreed that it might be Himmler. The Russians were given a roll of film taken by Sergeant Sutton.

The body remained in the front room of 31a all during May 25 whilst an autopsy was performed (Himmler's height was given as 5ft 8½ ins) and Major G. R. Attkins made a dental report and drawing of Himmler's teeth. ('What a good job I didn't let Jimmy take out those teeth,' wrote Major Whittaker!) A death mask was also made which can now be seen in the Royal Army Dental Corps Museum at Aldershot.



Himmler's death mask now on exhibit at the Royal Army Dental Corps Museum at Aldershot.



The sketch made of Himmler's teeth by Major G. R. Attkins on May 25, 1945.

Above: Major Whittaker (seated at the table), contemplates the corpse in the presence of an American officer who came to view the body. Left: Russian officers, drawn by Captain de Grineau 'grudgingly agreed it might be Himmler'.

Later that day, May 25, at 5.00 p.m., Colonel Murphy held a press conference and Sergeant Major Austin recorded his description for the BBC of the last, dramatic moments: 'After a struggle, lasting a quarter-of-an-hour in which we tried all methods of artificial respiration, under the direction of the doctor . . . he died . . . and when he died . . . we threw a blanket over him . . . and left him.'

This was the beginning of the story that Sergeant-Major Austin was the man who buried Himmler. When questioned later as to what had happened to Himmler he said: 'I wrapped him up in a couple of blankets. Then I put two of our army camouflage nets around him and tied him up with telephone wires. I put the parcel on the back of a lorry and drove off. I had to dig the grave myself and nobody will ever know where he is buried.' When asked after the war where he had buried Himmler, he would reply, 'I'll never tell anyone where the grave is. I've been in the Army and I know how to keep a secret.'

The editor believes that this was the story that Major Whittaker wanted his CSM to say: he wanted the tough Sergeant-Major to be the spokesman with a plausible story to satisfy the press and eliminate the possibility of any Nazi followers capitalising from a subsequent recovery of the body (as happened later with Mussolini). The truth is somewhat different.

Major Whittaker's diary then records that he then received a message from Colonel Murphy telling him 'to put the body under the earth in the morning. As few as possible to know the location.'

'Took the body out in a truck for its last ride. Hell of a job to find a lonely spot. Anyhow we did find one and threw the old basket into the hole which we had dug. We had wrapped the thing in a camouflage net. The press are still asking when we are going to have the funeral!'

We found Major Whittaker's account very amusing, especially with Jimmy wanting some teeth as souvenirs. When the Major returned to his office after the burial he was told he might have to dig the body up as Himmler's brother, Gebhardt, had been caught and might have to identify the corpse! This, however, proved to be a false alarm.

The downstairs front room of No. 31a — now an innocent-looking lounge.

Nevertheless, Major Whittaker was not to get off so lightly. Although he was demobbed on August 22, 1945, early in 1946, he had decided to rejoin the Control Commission in Germany. At the same time a report had reached the War Office that Himmler's body had been found — the very thing which the Allied authorities had tried to avoid. Major Whittaker was immediately flown to Germany to check on the gravesite, but he reported all was well; nothing had been disturbed.

And so the time came for our own visit to the area. We had already carried out preliminary research for this story during a visit to northern Germany in May 1975. A year later we had enough information to return to Germany and finally establish the exact route taken by Himmler during his last days. In this research we are indebted to John H.F. an NCO on Intelligence duties in the 11th Armoured Division in 1945, later in the Intelligence Corps and now a businessman in north-west Germany.

On June 30, 1976 our aircraft touched down at Hamburg Airport and an hour later we were at Bremervoerde. Through Frau Dr. Bachmann, curator of the town museum, we located the farmhouse of Herr Dankers where Himmler stayed from May 18-22. We spoke to his son, Heinrich, who remembered how the man with the black patch would not let them see him shaving as, no doubt, they would have recognised him without his disguise. By the time we left the farm it was getting late and the main road through Bremervoerde was deserted, probably looking very much the same as when Himmler walked along it on that Tuesday afternoon, just over thirty-one years previously.

The next morning we continued retracing

the route, starting from the mill. We had taken photographs outside in 1975 but, as we had arrived after office hours, had been unable to gain entry to see where Himmler spent his last night. This time, Herr Maehlmann let us photograph the first floor room which has now been converted into offices.

Himmler's route then ran south on Route 71 to Westertimke. Here, the old Civil Internment Camp on the outskirts of the village has now been taken over by the German Army and, in the process of modernisation, most of the old huts have been demolished.

John H.F. had already carried out a reconnaissance at Barnstedt, our next stop, so we knew we would not be disappointed with Kolkhagen Camp. Two of the original huts still remain used as bungalow residences, including the most important one — the reception block — and we were able to match the photograph taken of Himmler's adjutants exactly.

The final part of the journey, a drive of about 15 minutes, led to the death house on Uelzener Strasse — No. 31a (not No. 33 stated by Willi Frischauer in his book on Himmler, or No. 29, the Heiderose Hotel, as claimed by the owner). No. 33 was a restaurant at the time (now a local government office) and possibly Sergeant-Major Austin was billeted here and so confused the numbers when he was interviewed by Willi Frischauer.

No. 31a is now an old people's home, the German name for which is rather nice: Lebensabend or Life's evening. In the ground floor front room there is nothing to indicate its place in history. Rows of easy chairs in typical old people's home fashion line the walls. The floor has been covered with stuck-down linoleum so hiding the stained floor-boards in the 1945 photographs. Although it is not our usual policy to be secretive, we were careful to avoid breaking the news to the present caretaker and so perhaps upsetting some of the old folk spending their last days there in peace.

Above: Yo! Ho! Ho! — the Sergeant-Major and his men drink to the death of Himmler. Below: The editor on the same spot in the back-garden of No. 31a Uelzener Strasse.

In the garden, the editor enjoyed standing in for Edwin Austin in the picture of the Sergeant-Major and his merrie men toasting Himmler's demise. This rather bad quality snapshot was very kindly sent to the editor by one of the Sergeant-Major's daughters, both of whom were most helpful in our research. Although not clear in the printed photograph here, the cross is marked:

Heinrich Himmler
GEB 7.10.1900
TOT 23.5.1945

We are sure this is a symbolic photograph taken for the 'brag-books' of the soldiers concerned and obviously the cross was not actually placed on the grave.

So does anyone know the location of the grave today? Major Whittaker kept his silence, even from his son; likewise Sergeant-Major Austin went to Mortlake Crematorium in February 1972 having kept true to his word. Both men had been awarded the MBE for their wartime service. We believe that the map reference of the grave location does exist — but locked away in the War Office file which has never been released. The editor has instructed his son that if the file is declassified in a hundred years, he will publish a special edition of After the Battle — in 2045!

BRITISH INVASION DEFENCES

by Henry Wills

After twenty years of peace, Britain in 1940 found herself facing a powerful enemy just across the English Channel. Again the sea proved to be Britain's first line of defence, but a line that soon had to be reinforced.

The Napoleonic Wars had posed a similar threat; this was countered by the building of a series of forts around the coast. These were updated and modified during Victoria's reign, when the forts around naval bases assumed special importance.

An alarm was sounded in World War I, when along the East Coast gun emplacements and pillboxes were built, some of the latter using design features to be repeated in 1940. This was the hexagonal type along the Thames Estuary. The government at the time took the threat of invasion seriously and over 300,000 troops were employed in this defence task by 1918.

Before World War II no anti-invasion plans seem to have been made, reliance being placed on the Maginot Line in France. In 1939 the BEF departed to France and from there went to the Belgian frontier, where there was no Maginot Line.

Here, in the French Secteur Defense de Lille, there was a single concrete pillbox every 800 to 1,000 metres, enfilading the partially completed anti-tank ditches. Although proof against field artillery fire, they were designed for the use of French weapons. Modified mountings eventually solved this problem, but the weakness of the line led to the density of pillboxes being raised to six per kilometre and this was reached by May 1940.

Top: The formidable defences which were to hinder the Germans at the Toby Jug roundabout at Tolworth, Surrey consisted of old cars filled with concrete! (IWM) Above: No delays today as the roundabout and cinema have been demolished and replaced by a huge underpass.

With over four hundred to be completed, speed of construction was most important and about six standard types were approved, with special types for unusual sites. This standardisation of design assisted the builders who used steel shuttering which could be used repeatedly. All this happened in France during the 'phoney' war, but nothing happened in Britain until May 1940, when this experience of defence construction was put to use. However pillboxes were often sited too hurriedly for their best use, wasting labour and material.

With General Ironside in command of

Home Forces, a static defence plan was formulated, because after Dunkirk the British Army was lacking in weapons and transport to make it the mobile force necessary to combat the German panzers' Blitzkreig. This defence scheme envisaged a 'coastal crust' of stiff defence, behind which were to be stop-lines, road blocks and anti-tank obstacles to prevent the quick exploitation of a breakthrough by German motorised columns. This series of stop-lines, five in East Anglia and three in southern England, were to run parallel to the GHQ Line, which was to be the front-line in the event of a long drawn out land battle.

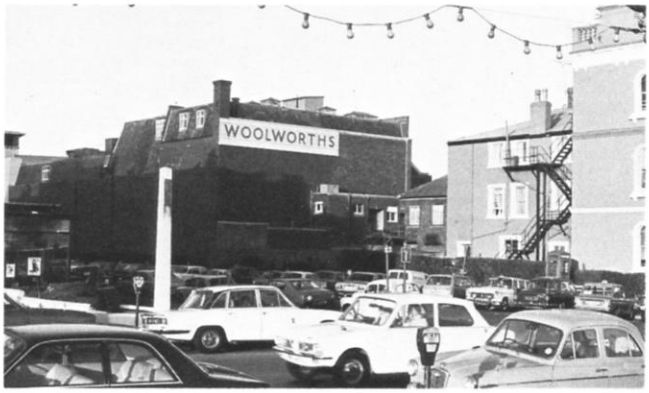
This line ran from Bristol along the Kennet and Avon Canal to Reading, around Aldershot and London to the north-west of Maidstone, then north through Cambridge to the Wash. The northern section was to run from Richmond in Yorkshire to the other side of the Wash, thus completing the GHQ Line.

This was the overall plan which is now considered more closely. By the middle of June many of the 786 field guns available were situated to cover the most likely landing places, beaches were being mined and wired with concertina barbed wire and anti-tank obstacles were sprouting along promenades and sea fronts.

The LDV (later Home Guard) had been formed and was manning many temporary road blocks, often consisting of farm carts, old cars and any other item that came to

Above: The peaceful scene at Longford Castle, beside the River Avon, near Salisbury, photographed by Henry Wills, contrasts to that below, taken by Mr. Malindine on December 17, 1940 (IWM). The castle was in the 5th Corps area of Southern Command.

Left: That lovely phrase 'Trays for the Sands' belies this concrete strong point at the Deck Cafe, Dymchurch, photographed by Mr. Puttnam on July 16, 1940 (IWM), with our comparison above.



WORTHING, SUSSEX

On June 26, 1940 (at 4.20 p.m. to be exact!), Mr. Saidman photographed defences in Worthing—here beach huts block a road similarly blocked in 1975 with cars (IWM).

ENFIELD, MIDDLESEX

The Ridgeway, Enfield, outside Chase Farm Hospital. Captain Console photographed a camouflaged pillbox and removable road obstructions, all now disappeared (IWM).

SHORNCLIFFE, KENT

Just below Moore Barracks by Hospital Hill, Captain Keating photographed this strongpoint disguised as a small chalet on July 9, 1940. Nothing remains today (IWM).

EDINBURGH, SCOTLAND

The Germans would have got more than brambles up their blowpipes at this florists on Princes Street. Photo by Captain Horton (IWM).

hand. Roads leading inland were given special treatment with tar barrels prepared as flame fougasses and later, numbers of cylindrical concrete blocks supplemented the more permanent steel rail tank traps which could be placed upright in sockets across the carriageway.

At this time many pillboxes were being constructed by civilian contractors. An army officer recalls telephoning a contractor, to order 200 pillboxes along 50 miles of coast, to be built in three weeks. The contractor's reply is not given!

By June, 150,000 workers were engaged in building defences. One of them, Mr. Albert Kennel of Hadleigh, Suffolk, remembers 'long hours of work, poor conditions, lack of warm food in isolated parts of the country or on the beaches and the dreadful tiredness we suffered'. The defences at Jaywick, near Clacton-on-Sea, were built by men left behind to maintain essential services (ARP, gas, electricity and sewerage, etc.), after the women and children had been evacuated inland. The fit men remaining were told to report to the Labour Exchange and 'volunteer' for defence construction, supplying their own tools! Others were directed to airfield and other camp construction which was a feature of East Anglia during the war years. Work at Jaywick consisted of erecting long iron spikes set in concrete on the beach, below the high tide line. The youngest workers were lads of 15, together with men of ages ranging up to that of one pensioner of 82 years. They worked long hours, even in the moonlight, to beat the incoming tide. With more glamorous subjects to hand, very little recognition has been given to 'the many' who worked under difficulty to create quickly the defence works for the services.

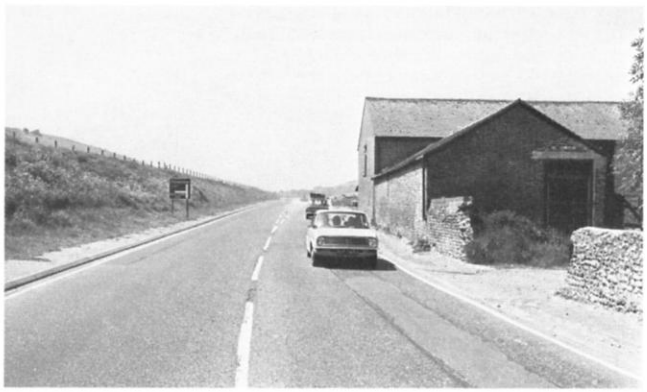
At St. Osyth, Pumphill, a workman was machine-gunned by an aircraft while finishing the top of a pillbox before the concrete set too hard; he died later that day in the local hospital—just one case of bombing and strafing of construction workers along the East Coast by the Luftwaffe.

As construction progressed, demolition of beach huts that obstructed fields of fire for the pillboxes was in progress. Mines were laid and in some places steel scaffolding was erected, but later tests proved this a not very effective means of defence.

Obstructions to prevent the use of large open areas as landing grounds was a colossal task set for local authorities, but finally only areas near military objects were obstructed. Even this was an expensive business as the East Riding of Yorkshire found when buying 100,000 concrete posts costing about £1 each to make and erect. Old cars, carts and even furniture was dumped in heaps across open

Above: Triple-dannert concertina wire defences on the sea front at Sandgate, Kent. Captain Keating, July 10, 1940 (IWM). Below: The exact spot in the summer of 1975.

Left: Typical defences against glider or aircraft landings were photographed by Captain Console on July 5, 1940 on the Caterham by-pass on the North Downs, south of London (IWM). Above: We couldn't find a trace of the foundations when we took our photo.



FOLKESTONE, KENT

Roads were blocked, especially near the coast, using a variety of devices. This is the road between Folkestone and Dover just beside Little Fathinglow Farm (IWM).

FINDON, SUSSEX

More permanent concrete obstructions on the A24 near Findon on June 26, 1940 (IWM). Only the cars and taller trees mark the passing of thirty-five years.

WARNHAM, SURREY

We wonder if this is the Mk II model of the British road-block! (IWM) Again little change on the road between Warnham and Horsham.

SHERINGHAM, NORFOLK

A combination of tank traps and movable railway lines ably manned by men of the 6th Battalion, Norfolk Regiment, just beside Sheringham station (IWM).

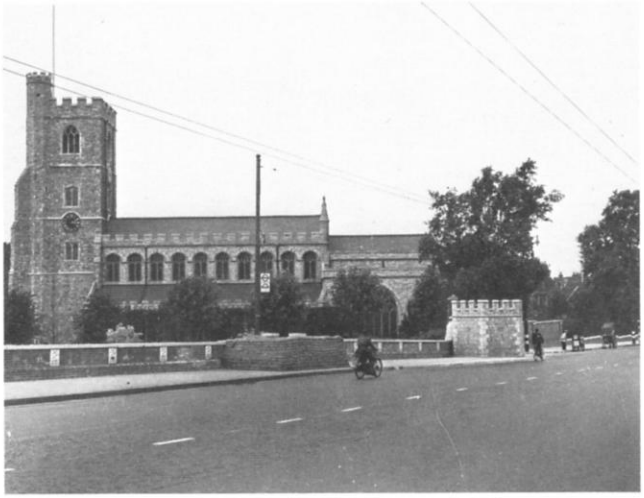
spaces early in the invasion scare period.

As the days passed the design and siting of road blocks improved, with a comprehensive scheme completed by the Ministry of War Transport for the War Department. The normal pattern had a large concrete block each side of the road, steel rails of different lengths which slid into five rows of holes across the road and in front a number of concrete cylinders which were to roll about freely as added hindrances.

Often roadblocks in the stop-lines were covered by a pillbox, sometimes of the larger type which could house an anti-tank gun as well as a machine gun. These stop-lines would appear to have pillboxes spaced at between 800 and 1,000 metres intervals, with some important river crossings having a greater concentration.

At this time airfields had their quota of pillboxes, six of the hexagonal pattern seems to be the average number built around the perimeter, with two of them covering the landing area against airborne attack. Some airfields still have the remains of the small circular type, which had an anti-aircraft machine gun mounted on the top. The roof of these was slightly domed to make rapid traverse at high elevations possible for the gunner.

RIVER THAMES



PUTNEY BRIDGE

Bridges in London over the River Thames were protected by camouflaged pillboxes on the northern end. We like this one best on Putney Bridge beside All Saints' Church (IWM).

WANDSWORTH BRIDGE

This incongruous builder's hut in Wandsworth Bridge Road belies its true purpose. What a shame one of these masterpieces was not preserved (IWM).

CHELSEA BRIDGE

The only trouble about this disguise is that you wouldn't really expect to find an elaborate hut in the centre of an important road junction (IWM).

FLAME DEFENCES

The Petroleum Warfare Department was created on July 9, 1940. The first successful experiment was carried out on August 24, 1940. Ten pipes delivered twelve tons of fuel an hour. Admiralty flares, sodium and petrol pellets were used to ignite the petrol. Within a few seconds, a wall of flame raged up from the sea which began to boil. The test illustrated here was carried out in March the following year at Studland Bay in Dorset. However, it would appear from publicity at the time that these experiments were used more as a propaganda device. Our comparisons were taken on an equally hot day in 1975. No trace of the pipes or installations can be seen today.

FLAME FOUGASSE

Forty-gallon drums containing a mixture of tar, lime and petrol would be buried at the roadside. Steel filings were propelled into the drum and a small explosive charge ignited the contents and sprayed a great wall of sticky, molten liquid onto the road. This experiment was carried out on the old A705 at the western entrance to the village of Mid Calder in Scotland on November 11, 1940. The house, Kaimfoot, was built in 1954. We could find no trace to denote its fiery past.

HEDGE HOPPER

A variation (photo below) was to spray petrol onto the road from perforated pipes—a demonstration also given at Mid Calder in November, 1940. The pipe can be seen running along the wall (IWM).

In addition to the defences already mentioned, much effort was spent in digging trenches and weapon pits; this was usually done by the forces and often was in support of the concrete defence work. At this time concrete was more plentiful than armour, and as tanks operated with infantry, troops were to be expected to support pillboxes in their role as static 'armour'. Later in the war in all theatres, tanks were dug in and used as pillboxes.

When the Home Guard was formed, some thought all they had to do was to sit in a pillbox and shoot straight. Soon it was realised that pillboxes had to be protected from close attack and that they were to be vacated when the enemy got within grenade range. Despite their limitations, they would have raised the morale of unskilled troops or Home Guard fighting at more than 50 yards from the enemy.

Associated with the pillboxes of the stoplines are the 'Dragons' Teeth'—those concrete pyramids often photographed during the war and still in existence.

'Dragons teeth' outside Dover, Kent.

An exhaustive search has been made to trace official maps showing the GHQ line and other lines of defence planned and constructed in 1939-40. However, it seems that no overall map exists.

Henry Wills has therefore been photographing and recording the location of WW2 defences remaining today and plotting the precise location on Ordnance Survey maps. From this he will be able to build up an overall plan.

Naturally the majority of pillboxes that were constructed have been demolished. They were not considered of any historical interest and they soon disappeared in the immediate post-war years. Those that remain are either on private land, isolated parts of the foreshore, military establishments or aerodromes and only there where they have not impeded the house or road builder.

Henry Wills is involved in a fascinating research project and he has already appeared on BBC Nationwide TV. Any readers interested in getting in touch with him to give him details of pillboxes remaining in their area, should write to him at 5 Washern Close, Wilton, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP2 0LX.

Right: Few pillboxes remain today with their original camouflage. We tried unsuccessfully to get a 'cuppa' at this one at Sheerness, Kent!

Top: We thought if we could find this pillbox it might still be in its original condition, but an incorrect caption didn't help with the location (IWM). We finally found it in Bread and Cheese Lane, Cheshunt, Hertfordshire but, unfortunately, all the paint has washed off.

AFTER THE BATTLE

PRESERVATION

War Graves

The two great wars of the twentieth century, unlike earlier conflicts, have visibly left their mark in a profusion of memorials and war cemeteries. Naturally those of the First World War are concentrated in Europe, especially in France and Belgium (although there are also WW1 cemeteries in the Middle East and in Africa) while the graves of the Second lie in all five continents.

The respectful burial of war dead is a relatively modern event; if we go back to Waterloo, Thackeray commented that the ordinary soldier had been 'shovelled into a hole . . . and so forgotten'. It was the Adjutant-General of the Union Army in the American Civil War who, in 1862, ordered that commanding generals mark off plots of ground 'in some suitable spot in every battlefield . . . and to cause the remains of those killed to be interred, with headboards to the graves bearing numbers and, where practicable, the names of the persons buried in them'. A register of the graves of each burial ground was to be preserved and by 1866 there were forty-one such cemeteries containing over 100,000 Union soldiers.

By 1871, in the Treaty of Frankfurt, the French and German Governments undertook 'to respect and maintain the graves of soldiers buried in their respective territories' following the Franco-Prussian War.

The slipshod burial methods of the British in the nineteenth century improved during the Boer War when the Government supplied metal crosses to mark the graves of soldiers killed in South Africa. However, when the Great War began in 1914, there was still no official body organised to care for the war dead. It was left to a British Red Cross Unit, led by Fabian Ware, to collect evidence about British dead alongside their normal duties of caring for the wounded. The unofficial efforts of this small but dedicated team were typified by one member of the Unit who described how they would replace the rough soap-box crosses with well-made crosses with a painted inscription and tarred base: 'I feel my modest efforts amply rewarded when I return with a wooden cross and plant it at the head of the grave, for I have the proud satisfaction of knowing that I have done some slight honour

Above: A temporary marker on the grave of Guardsman Speirs, killed in action shortly after the Anzio landings and buried in the Military Cemetery, Plot C Row C Grave II (IWM). The poem was added by his brother. Below: The same cemetery, transformed by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission into the Anzio War Cemetery.

to one brave man who has died for his country'.

Fabian Ware's early energy and enthusiasm for recording, where possible, the location of every grave led to his unit being accepted officially by General Macready, Adjutant-General to the British Expeditionary Forces, early in 1915. Its name was changed to the Graves Registration Commission and Ware himself became a Major, becoming totally absorbed by a task which was to occupy him for the rest of his life.

Between May and October 1915, nearly 27,000 new registrations were added to the original list of about 4,300 graves. Card indexes were prepared with both regimental and geographical references. Agreement was reached with the French Government for areas of land for cemeteries to be given in perpetuity and similar arrangements were generously agreed by the Belgian, Italian, Serb and Greek Governments in due course.

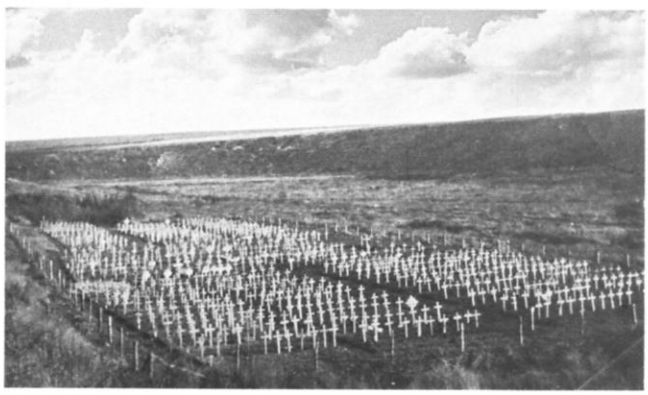
It was in 1916 that Major Ware, responding to the new, democratic mood taking hold of the Army, pressed for equality in the treatment of both officers and men killed in battle. This was much against the sentiment then prevailing in Britain where those in a position to do so were exhuming and repatriating their dead. Likewise some officers' graves were marked with more imposing memorials. Ware sensed that the new comradeship bred of the hardship and horror of the trenches ignored all barriers of class, position or rank. All exhumations for repatriation were stopped in April 1915 and the construction of permanent memorials in May the following year.

In February 1916 the Commission had become the Directorate of Graves Registration and Enquiries, but with the massive increase in casualties in 1917, including men of the Dominions of Australia and Canada, India, New Zealand and South Africa, a new body was created under Royal Charter: the Imperial War Graves Commission. The Commission was charged to care for the graves of all the members of the Imperial Forces who 'die from wounds inflicted, accident occuring or disease contracted, while on active service whether on sea or land' and it was unique in as much as it was the first organisation charged with the care of all the dead of a nation in any war.

Shortly thereafter Sir Frederick Kenyon, Director of the British Museum, was briefed to decide between the various proposals as to the architectural treatment and laying out of cemeteries. Major Ware also announced the most important decision the Commission ever made: that there was to be no distinction between officers and men lying in the same cemeteries in the form of memorials. The proper place for individual memorials was, he said, in the homes and villages of the deceased, not in the military cemeteries abroad.

The cost of the cemeteries, it was decided, would be borne by the Empire's Governments in direct proportion to the number of graves of their dead, the largest, that of the United Kingdom, bearing eighty per cent. Costs were

Top: The shattered WWI Military Cemetery at Dranoutre near the Belgian-French frontier. Above: Today Dranouter Military Cemetery lies peaceful and serene overlooked by the Cross of Sacrifice.



Above: Blighty Valley Cemetery on the Somme in 1921. Ploughed up in WW2, it has now been beautifully restored (right).

estimated at £10 each for the 584,619 graves required. Headstones of a design acceptable to all religions would be inscribed with the regimental badge or national emblem, also a religious emblem which was replaced by the Victoria Cross where the recipient had won that award. Each inscription would include the name, rank, regiment, date of death and an inscription supplied by the next of kin limited to sixty letters.

The cemeteries themselves took on the appearance of an English country garden with graves of level turf and headstones, surrounded by headstone borders. (In those countries where there is a danger of earth tremor, or where the local stone is of insufficiently good quality to allow for the construction of headstones, these are replaced by recumbent markers to which are attached inscribed bronze plaques.) The wooden crosses marking the graves were to be offered to the next of kin and often these can be seen today in Parish Churches; there are many in the cloisters of Salisbury Cathedral.

A general monument was designed by Sir Edward Lutyens to stand in those cemeteries which contain more than 1000 graves. This is the Stone of Remembrance engraved with the quotation chosen by Rudyard Kipling from *Ecclesiasticus 44:14* 'Their name liveth for evermore'. Kipling also formulated the wording to be used for unidentified dead: 'A Soldier of the Great War . . . Known unto God'. He also solved another problem, in how to mark a grave where the temporary marker had been destroyed in a later battle, with the words 'Known (or believed) to be buried in this cemetery' or 'Buried near this spot'. In the case of graves lost or destroyed through bombardment, Kipling chose: 'Their glory shall not be blotted out'. Reginald Blomfield, another eminent architect, designed the Cross of Sacrifice—a tall finely-proportioned stone cross with a symbolic Crusader's sword of bronze on its face.

This is not to say these designs were accepted lightly. The principle of equality was still not accepted by many, and public discussion and argument continued, culminating in a debate by Members of Parliament on May 4, 1920. There were also half-a-million soldiers, sailors and airmen with no known grave at all and the arguments as to how they were to be remembered were equally as heated.

The Commission's task for the 1914-1918 War took until 1938 to complete when the Australian National Memorial was unveiled by King George VI at Villers-Bretonneux in northern France. All told, 1,115,128 dead from the First World War are remembered by a named grave or inscription on a Memorial to the Missing. Identified graves number 584,619 with 530,509 commemorated on memorials.

During the Second World War, the Commission maintained its principles of equality with no repatriation for the 580,033 killed between 1939 and 1945. The only exception to the rule is in St. Helier War Cemetery in the Channel Islands which was created during the German occupation where the heavy oak crosses, constructed from a tree felled for the purpose, have not been replaced at the request of the States of Jersey.

Identifiable remains total 338,556 with 241,477 names being commemorated on memorials. If identifiable remains are discovered today for a person listed on a memorial by an inscription, this wording is not excised, but a note is made in the records. Thus it may be that a few individuals have both a named grave and inscription.

In 1974, newly discovered remains of 36 casualties of both wars were recovered from isolated battlefields in France and Germany and reburied in registered graves in war cemeteries. These included five casualties never previously recorded; thus the total dead for the wars had to be adjusted accordingly.

Three stages of a war cemetery at La Deliverande, Normandy. Above: First burials during the fighting. Below: Fenced with SMT track, neatly laid out as a military cemetery.

Above: The final stage after the addition of the CWGC headstones and horticulture.

The task of laying out the Second War cemeteries and constructing the memorials was completed in 1961 with the unveiling of the memorial in Phaleron War Cemetery near Athens by the Duke of Gloucester, President of the Commission, which was renamed the Commonwealth War Graves Commission in March 1960.

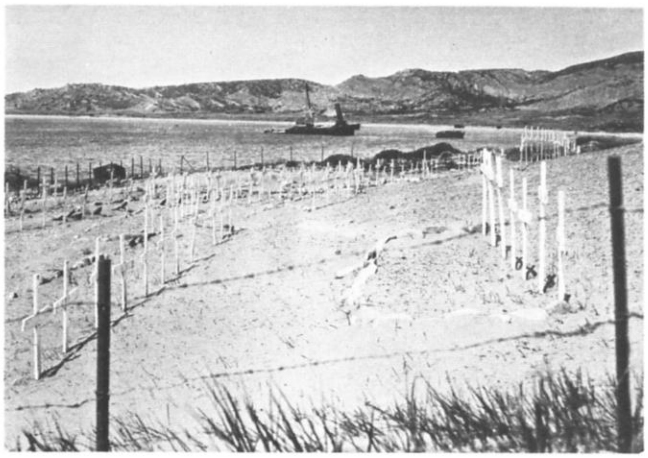
Today, the extent of the Commission's charge may be judged from the fact that nearly one and three-quarter million are commemorated by name. More than a million, including thousands of unknown men and women, lie in nearly 24,000 burial places in 145 different countries and dependent territories, some in vast war cemeteries—'silent cities' as Rudyard Kipling called them—others in smaller ones, singly or in groups within civil cemeteries or churchyards. Three-quarters of a million men and women who have no known grave or whose remains were cremated, are honoured on memorials ranging from small tablets bearing a few names to great monuments commemorating many thousands. The Memorial at Thiepval to the missing of the Somme of the First World War bears over 73,000 names, and the memorial at Runnymede to the missing of the Commonwealth Air Forces in North West Europe in the Second World War, over 20,000.

The Commission holds registers of the dead in both wars and can provide details of individual casualties on request. It also ought to be mentioned that 66,375 civilian deaths due to enemy action are recorded in the Civilian War Dead Roll in Westminster Abbey, London, details of which are also held by the Commission.

This widespread work is protected in foreign countries by a series of international agreements, which recognise the Commission as the authority responsible for the care of the graves. The Governments of many countries have generously acquired, at State expense, the land occupied by the cemeteries and have granted the Commission its perpetual use.

The work of the Commission has influenced many other nations in the creation and maintenance of their own war cemeteries and

Then and now . . . El Alamein War Cemetery, Egypt.



Ari Burnu Cemetery, Anzac, Gallipoli, Turkey.

Bayeux War Cemetery, Normandy, France.

Sai Wan Bay Cemetery, Hong Kong.

memorials. However, not all seek to copy the sense of tranquility and the just balance between equality and individuality so characteristic of the British War Cemeteries.

Although the American style of commomoration most nearly approaches that of the Commission, the cemeteries and memorials are far more grandiose with walled, wide expanses, the graves being generously spaced between lush, green turf. The cemeteries are maintained by the American Battle Monuments Commission with headquarters in Washington.

When the United States entered the First War, the Government promised to return the bodies of the dead to all relatives who wished to bury them near their homes. This principle was directly opposed to that laid down by the Imperial War Graves Commission. The remaining American dead were then concentrated into eight large cemeteries, one for each battle area: Aisne-Marne, Flanders Field, Meuse-Argonne, Oise-Aisne, St. Mihiel, Somme, Suresnes and Brookwood, England. The graves are marked either by a Latin Cross or a Star of David depending on religion. The inscription on the crosses of high-ranking generals or Medal of Honor recipients is picked out in gold. Memorials in each cemetery include the names of the missing who died in that area.

Repatriation of the remains to the United States was again permitted for the 405,399 Americans who lost their lives in the Second World War, where this was desired by the next-of-kin. Now only thirty-nine per cent of American War dead from both wars remain buried overseas. In 1945 a further fourteen sites were selected by the American Battle Monuments Commission for permanent cemeteries. These are located at Neuville-en-Condroz and Henri-Chapelle in Belgium; Cambridge in England; St. James, Epinal, St. Avold, St. Laurent, and Draguignan in France; Margraten in Holland; Nettuno and Florence in Italy; Hamm in Luxembourg; Manila in the Philippines and Carthage in North Africa. Additionally, there are three National Cemeteries outside continental United States in which Second War dead are buried: San Juan, Puerto Rico; Sitka, Alaska, and Honolulu, Hawaii (where dead from the Korean War are also buried).

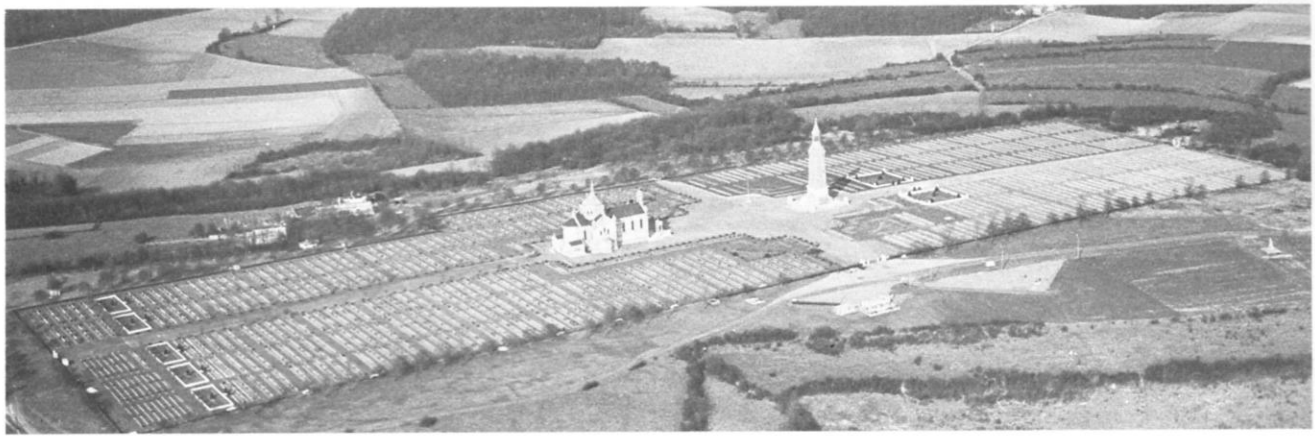
Above: St. Laurent-sur-Mer Cemetery was laid out on top of the bluff above Omaha Beach by the US Army Graves Registration Service. The cemetery was closed in 1947 for those remains to be transferred to the United States where requested by the next-of-kin. Below: It now contains 9386 graves of which 307 are unknown. Altogether, some 172,000 American WW2 remains have been repatriated to the United States.

The American authorities are very particular about trying to establish the exact identity of remains found today, and the Army Casualty and Memorial Affairs Directorate maintains a scientific laboratory with extensive files on the missing.

In 1974, remains from the Second War were uncovered in Saipan, New Guinea, the Philippines and even Arizona where the bodies were found of two aircrew lost on a training flight. All were identified. Ten remains from WW1 found in Germany could only be identified as Americans; likewise no positive identification was possible for some Civil War remains uncovered at Petersburg, Virginia. Each year up to twenty cases are reported to the CMAD headquarters in the Forrestal Building at L'Enfant Plaza, Washington, as well as those from the Vietnam war from which 850 Americans are still classified as missing.

The French concept of the treatment of war dead varies, but the traditional view is that of the ossuary—a huge building heaped with the unburied bones of thousands of unnamed soldiers. It was felt this was cheaper and also the proper receptacle for a soldier's bones. One from the First War is the huge ossuary at Douaumont near Verdun containing the remains of 100,000 soldiers, the remains of

The French War Cemetery of Notre Dame de Lorette contains 20,000 graves with another 20,000 unknown in the ossuary.

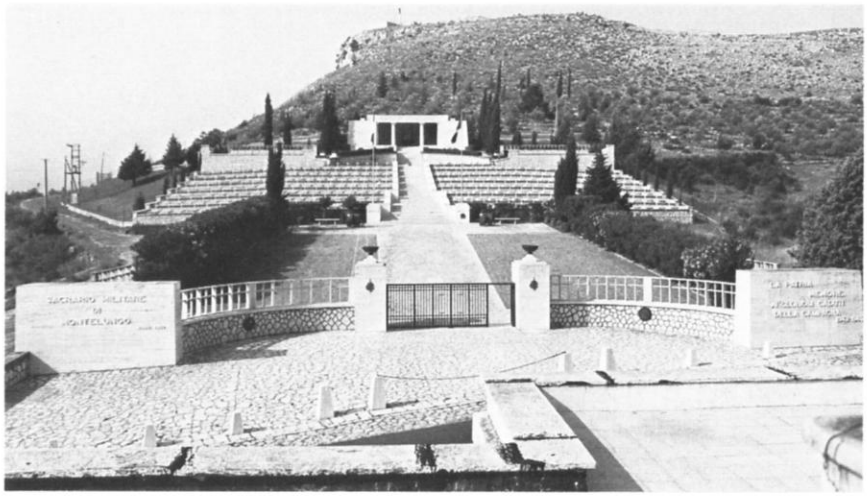


which are viewed through windows. Another rather gruesome example is that at Norte Dame de Lorette where the visitor walks between piles of bones in the underground ossuary. Mass graves are also evident in many French cemeteries and at Naples, the dead are separated by religion. French casualties in the Second War totalled 170,000.

Italian graves can be found in all five continents dating from both their wars of 1915-18 and 1940-45. Casualties in the Second War totalled 444,523. Those buried in the United States, Australia, Rhodesia and South Africa were Italian prisoners of war who died in captivity. The headstones vary in size and design, some being crosses, others plaques let into the ground. Cemeteries are usually constructed with gravel paths for ease of maintenance. That at Monte Lungo in central Italy has an adjacent war museum with some beautifully preserved tanks and guns. The Italian Commissariato Generale Onoranze Caduti in Guerra does differentiate between the graves of officers and men.

Whilst the Volksbund Deutsche Kriegsgraeberfuersorge treats German officers and men as equals, the style of headstones is not consistent. Often graves are gathered together in shrines; in many, two or three or four soldiers share the same grave with a common headstone, on the principle of comradeship in death. For many years German cemeteries could still be seen with the original, wooden markers, named only by the individual identification discs nailed on each cross. The cemeteries are sombre in mood with symbolic clumps of granite crosses surmounting beds of heather, synonymous with the German homeland.

With the tremendous casualties suffered by the German forces in both wars, mass graves were probably a necessary expedient. Figures issued by the German statistics authorities give 1,936,897 First War dead with 100,000 missing, and 4,300,000 dead in the Second War of which 1,500,000 were missing. A very sore point with the German authorities is the treatment of German graves in Russia where 2,180,000 Germans died during the Second World War. The Soviet authorities have razed most cemeteries to the ground and obliterated all trace of individual graves. This may reflect the general Soviet attitude to war dead. One Soviet officer, talking of one battle, said, 'We would have needed an army of grave diggers . . . there was no time to waste'. Huge memorials such as that in Berlin cover mass graves with no names inscribed on them and travellers to the Soviet Union have sensed a feeling that it did not matter to the dead whether they were individually or collectively buried.



Above: The Italian War Cemetery at Monte Lungo contains 974 graves of those killed in the 'War of Liberation 1943-45'.

Above: March 16, 1941. General Schaumburg, Paris Military Commander and German Ambassador, Otto Abetz, attended a parade in Ivry Cemetery in south-east Paris (Bundesarchiv). Below: The same Division 14 today. The German graves were transferred to Champigny St. Andre Soldatenfriedhof in 1959-60 where 19,173 soldiers now lie buried. Below left: The grave of Gefrieter Karl Garbe, Block 6, Row 12, Grave 981, the centre grave in the Ivry photograph. Garbe lies on the left and Dittrich on the right.

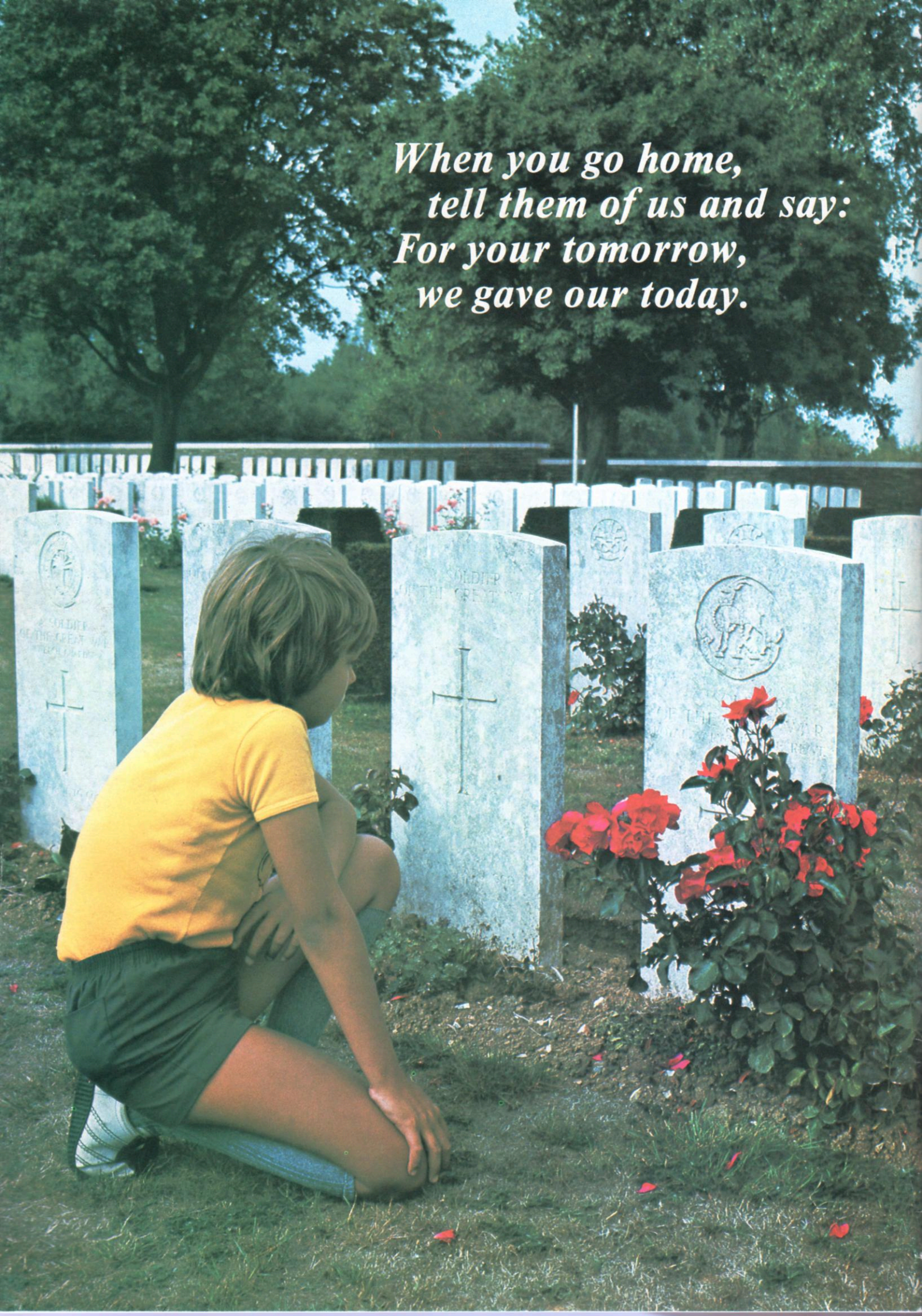
Above: The Chidorigafuchi National Tomb for the Deceased Soldiers in Tokyo, Japan contains the ashes of soldiers who died in the Second World War.

In Japan, the souls of the war dead are worshipped by the people as a god who protects the nation. This is centred around the Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo. The number of Japanese soldiers killed in the Second World War is estimated by the Japanese authorities at not less than 2,000,000. Although the remains of all war dead are, by custom, returned to their families, the very nature of the Far East fighting meant that the recovery of the bodies would present difficulties.

When the San Francisco peace treaty was put into force in 1953, the Japanese government despatched missions to the various overseas theatres of war to find and return some remains to Japan. These cremated ashes from each front were then interred as symbolic of all the Japanese war dead in Chidorigafuchi National Tomb for the Deceased Soldiers in Tokyo. Other remains are contained in twenty-four ash bins in six underground vaults beneath the tomb. The Tomb and Memorial Garden was opened in the presence of the Emperor of Japan on March 28, 1959 and can be regarded as a parallel to the Unknown Soldiers of the Western world. Other Japanese tombs of war dead have been established in Australia, the Saipan Islands, Philippines, Iwo-Jima and Okinawa.

September 16, 1976, saw the first preview of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's new film 'I will make you a Name', which is now available on free loan to groups and schools from the headquarters at 2 Marlow Road, Maidenhead, Berks. Edited from 200 hours of film, written by Alistair Laing and narrated by Gabriel Woolf, the film tells the moving story of the one and three-quarter million Commonwealth dead buried in cemeteries and commemorated on memorials over five continents. It gives an excellent account of sixty years unstinting work to remember the Commonwealth war dead with a neutral theme—neither pacifist nor glorifying war. The 45-minute film ends with the question for all of us: We know where they died, where they lie and are remembered, but why . . . and for whom . . . and for what they died . . . is for each one of us to answer for ourselves.

Above: Field-Marshal Montgomery visited Canadian No. 2 Cemetery (established after the storming of Vimy Ridge on April 9, 1917), at Neuville St. Vaast, France on September 6, 1944. He is seen beside the WWI grave of an unknown soldier of the Royal Warwickshire Regiment (IWM). Overleaf: Our comparison in colour August 30, 1976.


When you go home,
tell them of us and say:
For your tomorrow,
we gave our today.